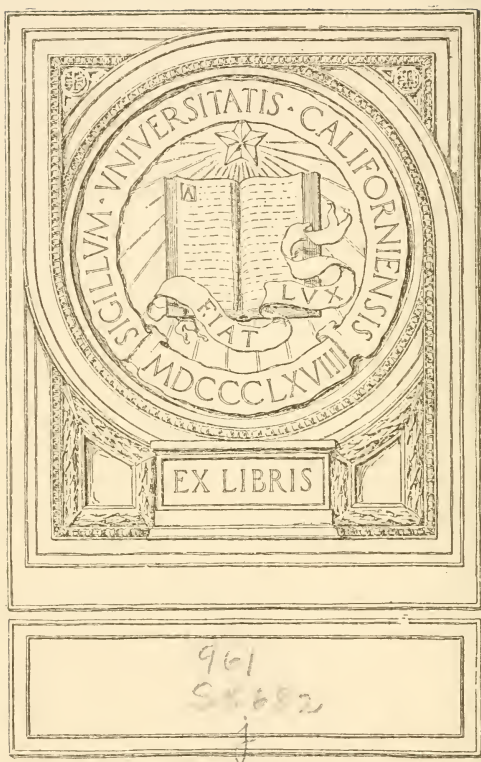


JAMESIE

E. SIDGWICK





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JAMESIE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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JAMESIE

BY

ETHEL SIDGWICK

LONDON

SIDGWICK AND JACKSON LTD.

1918

To H.
WHO HAD ACCEPTED IT, IN PROJECT,
UNREAD.

PREFACE, IF WANTED

[BY JAMESIE'S UNCLE.]

ST. JOHN HERBERT says, somewhere in the course of these letters, that he was not concerned with 'politics' in editing them. This, in our political era, may be regarded as a benefit. Herbert was not a politician properly, beyond, let us hope, a general sense of justice, since his business was the Law. Further, a Frenchman being his collaborator, if he really had entered seriously upon the disputations of our times, they would have had some undignified clashes. Even as it was, I am told the ink flew at moments,—however they agreed about Jamesie.

Herbert was modest, at least, as master of the ceremonies. He called the contents of his volume a 'shuffle,'—du Frettay called them a 'salad,'—both terms a little unfair. Because in shuffling and salad-making the intention (I believe) is to disorganise; and Herbert, in stringing our letters, certainly had some organic idea. That I grant him. What it was I leave to clever people of his own sort who read him. So far as I can see, everything that was really serious that passed between us, especially my own more thoughtful outpourings, Herbert left out. He put in a few thoughtful ones of his own, goes without saying. I wonder at times they were not all his: except that du Frettay had thoughts he needed to give to the world as well.

He divided his material into three parts, of which one pre-war, and which he named according to his private theory. As for character he had not (he told us kindly) much of a company; he had to take what he had and make the best of it. At least he had three or four nations, five or six classes, two sexes, and young and old. And he had Jamesie.

The worst documentary drawback was (he mentioned suddenly) that people lie so, in letters; and the more moving the times they live in, the more they lie. He was proceeding to illustrate, from the material under his hand, when du Fretay rather hastily interrupted him. He said the same people lied much more in life and literature: that is to say, they arranged things. He implied that it was no more than tolerable good manners, in society, to arrange things, and that in one's correspondence, it was purely a question of style. Then he said, that at least your letter-writer betrayed his own nature in lying, the form of his lying, which your newspaper-correspondent never did. There Herbert agreed with him, and they shook hands upon it; and both made an exception for Jim, the soul of truth and style as well: and they shook hands again.

Herbert declared he was not going to prefix a portrait of Jamesie, though he had plenty of sketches, Jamesie's mother being a painter; then he proceeded to start one in pen and ink. Jamesie was a Suir, he began, *but* handsome; *though* handsome, Herbert proceeded, he made the mistake of not resembling his mother the least. At this point du Fretay observed that Jamesie's mother had made him, mind and body: that his type was deep, deep-rooted in the English middle-classes, and not in the Irish upper at all: and that Herbert had far better

let him have the whole editing of the *sacré* letters, since du Frettay appreciated the English *malgré tout*. A little disputation occurred just there, so my nephew's portrait never got beyond.

Remained the technical convention, having swept the literary forms aside. Lies, or statements under suspicion, were accorded a point of interrogation, as being a help to the reader, and yet polite. Letters by grooms and the ungrown were to be punctuated: that was quite righteous; as much as that filthy handwritings (like Ashwin's and Iveagh's and Joyce's) should be given the clean dress of print. Spelling, in the communications of the Upper Ten (such as Shere) had to be looked to: they allowed themselves to supply meanings, in the form of words left out, to the contributions of children under five. Entirely imaginary letters, from horses and others, and purely commercial documents, like the bills that followed Steenie about, were suppressed altogether. Letters in foreign languages—I should not like to say all that happened about that.

As to French, Herbert owned himself an unpractised translator, but even he could not believe du Frettay would have translated into his native tongue more correctly than he. He had nobody's word but du Frettay's own for it, nor had he the time to test that, in his vexed life among the Tribunals: so they settled, to avoid difference, on a system of marginal notes, and then proceeded to disagree over each note in turn. German, said Herbert suddenly, he was willing to undertake, unless du Frettay put in a special claim for it; which disturbed our friend's feelings so much that he almost left his grievance about the French.

As to the prospects of the 'tendancieux,' that scare-

crow of our times, it might almost, said Herbert, be made a matter of excuse, that though his company was thick with warriors, none of them wrote about the war. They wrote about the commonest and most domestic matters, at least in the field, and in hospital they grumbled about their dinners. Du Frettay said his lot did that in the field as well, for reasons that the Administration was going to hear of presently: but that must have been a local peculiarity. They wrote (I quote Herbert) 'to young children, old nurses, and little marraines of whom they were careful. Sometimes they asked the world behind the lines, shyly as it were, whether things seemed to be looking up at all, and when it was likely to be over. Otherwise they seemed for the most part to be engaged in a thing that was horribly abstract, a cloud on the brain, more than a human business. They sought relief where they had always sought it, in comradeship, friendliness, such art as they could manage, such natural beauty as they could snatch: in argument and classical reading: in echoes of innocence from a world happily shut off from them: in family affection, freshly consecrated: in Love . . . uncensorable?'

See Jamesie.

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PART I.—THE STRIFE

JAMESIE

PART I.—THE STRIFE

Sophie Colmar to Francis Blakie.

DEAR FRANÇOIS,

I am told you come Saturday fortnight with M. Herbert. Is this fact? I burn to be sure. Excuse more, as I am brim with work to the Duchesse's arrival.

Je t'embrasse, mon cœur,

SOPHIE.

Francis Blakie to Sophie Colmar.

DEAR SOPHIE,

Mr. Herbert is letting me come, since they are short of players for the men's eleven. You and me, I suppose, will be opposite sides. Don't cry if I bowl you, because that's my business. And, I say, don't you go boasting and saying things imprudent, as likely with this indoor work I have lost my form. I've been coaching Mr. H. in odd times, but between ourselves he is not much good. Do you know of any other gentlemen playing, or is it just the scrap lot of farm and garden hands?

Keep me informed in case of alteration, won't you? It's a bit of all right your mother doesn't disapprove.

I shan't change Mr. H. now till I marry, so you'll have me at hand. After that naught but death shall us part, as the song says. Has that brother of the Duchess's spoken to you again?

Yours ever,
F. B.

The Duchess of Wickford to Lady Iveagh Suir.

DEAR BESS,

I am ashamed not to have written before, enclosing this: but you are not, my dear, obliged to accept it. Tell me right out if you would rather not, and I will console Steenie. I am a little afraid he may have been boring you lately, lounging in at all hours when you want to be painting: and you are probably too kind to him, much. I ought to tell you he is a lazy boy, and my husband has given him the go-by in Ireland. He is figuratively in the corner, and is only allowed to play for us because we must have men. I wish—I wish—I wish he would take to some sensible work. Yet I am so little older, and I can't be for ever scolding him, or he would tire of me,—and I am the last.

We are being sillier than usual on Saturday, chiefly for the children. It is cricket, men against women, the men playing left-hand. That is the sort of thing, if you came, I should have to offer you. Kells is hoping for Jamesie anyhow. Sophie tells me to say she would see to your dress.

[The card enclosed states that the Duchess of Wickford was at home,—cricket and dancing,—at Holmer, July 11th. And it was inscribed in her pleasant hand, 'Bess and Jamesie,' simply.]

The Duke to the Same—a scrawl.

I enclose what I consider right for Kells' portrait, and get yourself a frock with it and bring it us, not forgetting Jim.

The Marquis of Kells to Jamesie Swir.

DEAR J.,

Mother says your coming chucker-up! Secrets and Nurse is in it. Bring your Paintbox. Biscuit is ill and I'm riding Gypsy whose a dull old Girl. Nurse says this is shockenly written. Larks on Saturday.

Yours ever,

KELLS, KC.B.*

The Duke to his brother-in-law, Stephen Crawford.

. . . This, Steenie, is to let you know. You are fond, I am aware, of your sister's hospitality. It is her substance very largely, I don't deny, you have been wasting out there,† and no doubt you are welcome to it. What she would welcome less, is your going back on me. I have evidence you have used me beyond unfairly, as a cloak for your own misdoings; and you have gone too far now, I think, for any new extension I might grant you to set it right. I have given you chances enough. They dislike you, and me by means of you, and I, you kindly observe, am to blame for it, giving you too hard a job. So I would believe, if I had not given you others

* *Author's Note.*—It was Kells' and Jamesie's habit to give themselves titles, which they greatly preferred to their own. See henceforward in this history.

† Ireland.

simpler, where you had failed as signally. As it is I must evict you, Stephen, and invite you not to go back. I have too much conscience in these times to risk it, absentee as I am.

I am told you have played the villain to Katie Rochester, and her brother is one of those who attacks me. I am not making too much of that, knowing the ramshackle lot they are, and am keeping the worst of your foolery from Janet. But it is a warning, the first big thing that has slipped through your fingers, after the many lesser you have duffered, and I tell you, for Janet's sake, who cares for you, pull up while it is time.

I am older than you, and I am the injured party. You will not, I hope, take offence at this then, having forced it upon me: indeed, I think you must be expecting it, you come so little near us. Janet and I want you for her party as we have mentioned, and I trust you will pick up any decent cricketing hands you see. It is left hands we want peculiarly. The girls are in their strength, and they have got that kid Madeleine Pennant, who is tremendous. I am trying for an old Blue for Captain, There is a safe draw for a good reason,* and there is a bare chance my own brother may be back in time. I hope you have pinned Herbert. By the way, has he not a man belonging to him who is something of a bat? . . .

Canon Oxborough, to the Duke.

MY DEAR BOY,

To be sure I will captain your eleven if you really require me, but have you ascertained there are none of the young fellows more fit? Remember my

* See later.

age, my emaciated limbs and failing powers. Well, I will do my best, and let the monstrous regiment opposed to us look out! At worst I might have to get one of you boys to run for me. I will step over if I have time on Sunday and look at the pitch. Nonsense about not playing, I cannot have you shirking it. Committees indeed! We have all our bit of sacrifice to make in the public cause. Salute my fellow captain from me if you are writing. I have heard of her triumphs, tell her, and count her worthy of my steel. Love to Janet.

Your affectionate uncle,
LIONEL OXBOROUGH.

*Miss Madeleine Pennant, Buckdean School, to her sister
Joyce in London.*

All right, only for goodness sake do the writing. Dukes and duchesses are a trifle off my line. I've got the clothes I want, thank you, and I hope I know how to behave to a foreign eleven, men or otherwise. You seem to forget I have done it before. Of course a lot of men and girls ragging is hardly worth going over for, but better not let the duke know that. Do any of you, by any chance, know the rules? I like the duchess, what I have seen of her, and of course she is jolly kind to ask me for the dance.

Sorry you are off with Steenie, that is if you are. I suppose it would be cheek to suggest at this stage you might do better, but perhaps I am prejudiced. Besides, neither you nor Linda tell me much, do you,—so I can only make shots at the right thing to say. Mention to

the duke or whichever it is that I am obliged to Canon Oxborough. Anyhow *he* knows something of the game.

Yours,

M. M. P.

Lady Iveagh to the Duchess.

DEAR JANET,

Your letter is like you, kind. No, I would rather not come on Saturday. It is not the dress, though thank him and Sophie for thinking of it: it is for every reason I think I am better at home.

I am sorry about your brother. I did have to tell him not to come quite so often, that is the fact. So long as Kells was sitting to me, he came with Kells, that was simple. But Kells is no more, and still your brother continues,—I own it annoyed me, in front of Jamesie. I did not imagine he was serious, but I think children, in those ways, should be treated with the greatest respect. And Jamesie notices.

I heard from our Paris friends yesterday, and there they seem to be taking this Sarajevo business seriously. I hope it does not mean another blaze-up in the Balkans. Don't spoil Jamesie.

Your affectionate,

ELIZABETH SUIR.

Jamesie to St. John Herbert.

Mother isn't going but I am. She says I must tell you Father coming she has no Time. I told Mother it would have been difacult if she had Played, because we are backing the other side. Aunt Janet says Kells is playing possubly. Is Francis?

JAMESIE.

Kells to Canon Oxborough.

DR. UNCLE LIONEL,

Heres Mothers List. Shes made up Father isnt and says he wont be. We cant find any left-handed Men. Uncle Iveagh is but hes coming this time for my Poney. Theyve had two vets to him* and Tim is giving up hope. Aileen wanted me to ask, when Horses die, what happens? But I said not being Xtians you wouldnt know.

Your aft. nephew,
KELLS.

Follows the Ladies' List, we found so alarming.

Janet.

{ Joyce Pennant.
 { Laura Pennant.
 { Madeleine Pennant.

Linda Monk (Pennant.)

{ Trix Adler.
 { Jeannette Adler.

Sophie (my maid).

Miss Kitchin (his typist).

Lettice (nursery-maid).

Sybil (farm).

St. John Herbert to Canon Oxborough.

Right-o, Captain, though I am afraid you won't find me good for much. You ask about the others. I should judge it is a poor look-out. Crawford is capital on his day, but the Wickford family have been snubbing

* The poney.

him, the world and the women are agin him, so chances are he may refuse to play up. If I may be so impertinent, I warn you against pastoral exhortation in that quarter. The Duke you know. The Irish groom is a little devil in the field, and a monkey to run, but if the horse is ill, you won't have him. Iveagh might help, granted the boat gets in, but you bet it won't. Besides he has been enjoying fever, his wife tells me, so he may be off it as much as Crawford. The coachman is rotten. The valet is rank. My own fellow, on the other hand, is rather a mighty man, and inclined to give the young ladies a lesson. His inamorata will be looking at him,—need I say more? And which of the rest of us, Captain, will be in that happy position? Sometimes I think we are rather a seedy lot. . . .

Joyce Pennant to Stephen Crawford.

You won't get that other girl, so it is no good. She has put on the Puritan, Janet says, and is staying at home. She smells a rat, very natural, and I hear you have lost your appointment as doer to the Duke. You are really off your luck, aren't you? And here's Mad patronising you in her letter, so she won't do. And I hear on good authority the Frenchwoman is engaged. And I shall drown myself, naturally, when I have just had a taste of the Duke's champagne. There's a nice little froggy pond I know in the park at Holmer. Will you come along down there with me on Saturday night?

Sophie to the Same.

Je vous rends votre mot, Monsieur, *intact*. Je suis fiancée depuis peu, *engaged*, à celui que j'aime, homme de caractère et de courage, n'étant pourtant pas gentleman officier de cavalerie.

S. COLMAR.

The Dowager Duchess of Wickford to Canon Oxborough.

Will you tell me exactly what is happening at Holmer on Saturday? I understand you are concerned. Elizabeth mentioned she had been asked, and blushed a good deal about it. My son has not given me the chance of refusing. Yet I can hardly conceive you would be attached to anything outré, though Janet lets herself be led away by the American set sometimes. I heard Miss Adler mentioned by the children as attending this function. . . . If you can open my eyes to the ins and outs of this business of young Crawford, I should be thankful, too. I can never catch Wickford for five minutes nowadays.

Your affectionate sister,

GERTRUDE W.

The Duke to the Dowager Duchess.

Excuse my being reduced to ink, Mother, since I cannot make a minute to call, and I know telephones trouble you. We have not asked you for Saturday, though you know a room is open to you if you cared. It is the birthday rag in its extremest, chiefly to amuse the kids. It is the Pennants and the Adlers, plus Shere

and Steenie, with the Canon and a girl of sixteen to captain us, our elegant amusement being to watch the men play left-handed against the women right. What is more be licked, Mother, so you had better not come. It could hardly amuse you, and with the sort they are there is no avoiding a noise. . . .

The Same to St. John Herbert.

It is kind of you, Herbert, to make the effort, like you, and I hope it will not be bad for your work. It is the merest rag, Jane and I are ashamed of it. Times are bad, and between ourselves, we have been put to it to keep the thing up at all. Where I ought to be is Ireland, but I cannot get off, and she is inclined to be nervous. Young Crawford amused himself exclusively beyond in drawing discredit on me, and making himself anathema in the district. I have had some very queer letters, and I have not shown Janet the choicest ones. It is hard for her, her brother being in fault, not but what she is perfectly with me in dismissing him. That is the one thing, in the whole tangle, we are sure about, though what to do with the lad beats me. I think he is rotten, really, yet I dare not tell Jane. . . . Oh, the load it would be off me if I could send my brother across, and for good. I would like him to take it off me for good, Herbert. Tell nobody I said this, it is weakminded. But it needs a character such as his, slick and equal, easy-looking and untiring beneath,—oh untiring,—new every morning, as the hymn says. Courage, it all comes to that. A kind of bread-and-butter courage, facing the music, which Steenie has not. . . .

St. John Herbert to Lady Iveagh Swir.

A very nice letter from our duke, accepting me. I am going to play cricket there, absurdly, knowing that I can't. You have refused to do the same, says Jamesie. It is a lack of courage, I fear, Bess,—bread-and-butter courage,—which I possess. . . .

Lady Iveagh, to M. du Frettay, Paris.

Do tell me what you think about courage, something has set me considering. Do you admit several sorts, or is that nonsense? Is there a French courage and an English courage? Is there a common people's and a superior people's, an every-day and a Sunday kind? Is there a woman's and a man's?

Lord Iveagh to Lady Aileen Swir (aged 4) on a highly-coloured picture postcard from Queenstown.

Here are all the horses you want. Let your father know I may turn up a bit late, coming this way, say for the second innings. Tim and I can change.

The Duke to his wife, in haste.

. . . And now he informs me he is getting off in Ireland. Getting off! And he tells the nursery first. No, I am wrong, he tells the stable first, swearing at Tim about the poney. When I had made time to go to the port, and we had reckoned him into the eleven, and made sure of him for the girls, and Bess left hanging equally! I have said nothing, I will swear, this time, to distract him from coming straight home, for orders.

I said for orders, Jane. Little he regards me ! He will know the whole blessed boiling, beyond, before I can be level with him, and Katie will be weeping on his shoulder, since that is her habit with the men she likes, and her relations striving who can lie the sweetest on the subject of Steenie's crimes. . . . Janet, if those two do not fight this time, my luck is better than I ever thought it, and here if you please is Bess between them too ! That is two girls, three, if Iveagh likes to pick up the cudgels for Joyce, and I am much surprised if he lets any attractive-looking weapon lie about when he has seen that work beyond. He will be sky-high simply, he who hates incompetence, and who will drop in this manner into a situation which is the devil's own. My great fear is, that finding everything gone to glory, the building left, and half the men swearing to shoot me,* and the girls out on the roads, and the coastmen sleeping on their revolvers, and ten men's work in the office to do, he will wait and see it through, and so score off the pack of us. It would be like him. Spalpeen ! And him with the fever on him still, and that climate the worst he could choose, and a woman like his waiting for him patiently. He does not deserve to own her, Stephen is right. I am vexed with him sincerely. Oh, the blessing to know he is at last in reach of a penny stamp ! . . .

The Duchess to Lady Iveagh.

My dear, I am so glad about your man, and ashamed, —my fault. Or rather, my family's. But I am perfectly certain he will turn up, and so will Conor be thinking it over, not because of the cricket, nor of

* The duke exaggerates.

course because of you and Jamesie, but because of the horse. Aileen was crying all the morning, Nurse says, about Biscuit, whereas Kells, whose fault it really is, seems as indifferent as you please. He told Nurse his uncle was coming back to see about it,—about *his* poney, the pretension of the child. Really it is getting serious. If I believed he said those things for the sake of talking, as Conor does occasionally,—but he is like my family, prosaic and forthright. He says what he means as exactly as ticking shows a watch: and it is not always much more interesting, Bess, though of course it shows Kells. I think before this big treat I shall talk to him a little, and mention how much pleasanter Jamesie's way of taking things is, not assuming everything is laid out for his advantage. Though of course this party largely was, for if it had not been for disappointing them, the extraordinary contretemps, and extra worry it has been for Conor, would have made me give it up. It is only our children who regard our birthdays, is it? And I feel something less than inspired for the moment, I own. . . .

Kells to the Duke.

DEAR FATHER,

Biscuit is if anything worse, and won't eat, which is the begining of the end. I am not to see him till the last. Masters says Uncle Iveagh will come Tim's hair.

The Duke to Kells.

It's your own hair should have the combing, and will, when your uncle hears the truth. Walking him in the river heated, and forgetting his blanket with it, oh, we

JAMESIE

found out. A nice horse like that, better-bred than yourself is, where is the good of him and me taking the trouble we did? Aileen shall have the horses till you mend your ways. She'll be a better rider than you are anyhow. Now you talk small for a bit.

Your father,
W.

Jamesie to the Same.

N.B. Private. Important. Mother says the nicest for the Programme would be Aunt Janet's Arms, not ours, done at the top, with a very little gold. (1) Ours are so dull. (2) Peoples birthdays their own. (3) Hard to paint antlers. N.B. Aileen can do the goldening, if Nurse likes. (Mother.) But perhaps I had better this time, the thing been Public. (J. C. S.) She can watch you Print. Oh dear, I'm longing to start!! Such lots to arrange. Grandmother came for ages this morning. She said Father was tiresome, which Mother didnt think.

Yours ever,
J. C. SUIR, F.L.S., etc.

Pelham (valet) to Francis. Extracts from two letters.

DEAR BLAKIE,

I enclose Tim's reply to Mr. Herbert, which might have been cleaner, but he would write himself. He is bound to boast, being on that tack, though really in the cricketing line he is nothing to you. He is at present much set up having a letter from his lordship, and that out of Ireland, where his lordship is, though the tone of it is hardly flattering,—my word! No one

but Tim would have read it aloud. His lordship's in a way, no wonder, the way they use him. The Duchess wants him for her cricket naturally. The Duke wants him for Miss Pennants, says so openly,—you would have died hearing him to his mother in the hall. In the stable he is wanted too, and I ask you, has his wife no word? But that is always the way, the people who can turn a hand, in this life, are more in demand than the clever ones. Similarly, if I was to ask you, private, which was the more serviceable to his Grace's mother, Lady I. or her Grace's maid, I wonder what you would answer me. I think I know what Mr. Herbert would, I seen him get so vexed about it. . . .

Your saying the ladies did the courting nowadays made us roar, and Green is with you, though in the position I hold I have naturally nothing to say. Nor Tim,—he's never been third in a light dog-cart, when Mr. Crawford drove Miss Joyce. Nor have I noticed Miss Kitchin's manners to the same gent when she cannot for her life read something in his Irish notes. As if he would look at her. Sophie I believe has snubbed him, and perfectly right. By the way, I am also to convey congratulations from Sir George's man Parke, who was staying here recently. I was to say from Parke Sophie has the real Paris style lots of ladies try for, and try in vain. Parke has travelled a bit, and knows women, so I offer his remark at length as worth while. Lady I. is his choice amongst our particular, as she seems to be yours. I tried to get Sophie's views on this, but she dodged, being French. She puts Lady I. in one box with the Duchess, which is far from my own feeling, very far. Though do not imagine I have a word against her Grace, it is judging them by

their sex, as a man must at times. Lady I.'s friendship with Mr. H. she finds odd, her husband being away from her, while her terms with her brother-in-law are what Sophie considers correct. The way that girl criticises and cuts up, dragging the Duke into it. But we must remember, as Parke said very sensible when Sophie had left, that it is their boast to equalise everything, good and bad, in France. . . .

Tim Geoghan (groom) to St. John Herbert.

MR. HERBERT,

Id play and willing sir its but the matter of the horse to hinder me. It is a good horse this of Lord Kells and a delucate and it is a chanst if he slips through our fingers before Ld. Iveagh comes this last as much as my life is worth and so he explained to me in his personal hand.

Coming to comparasons, if it was running only we are on a level, but if it is bating his left hand gives it him somewhat, but if it is dodging and dubling Id easy take the lead. Wrestling I can lay his lordship down always could, and the Duke also, and him weak with the fever this time would about compleat his case. Beyond this it is a chanst but the ladies playing would prefer his lordship this match being the Duchesses which is in the conversing style.

Respectfully yours sir,

T. GEOGHAN.

Francis to Pelham.

Thanks for congrats. Let it be clearly understood I will not have Sophie on Saturday hanging about near where that fellow is when I am otherwise engaged.

When not wanted among the ladies she can easily retire or talk to the children or what she wants. I may be in for some time, more especially if I and the Canon get together. He played for Oxford in the eighties, Mr. Herbert said, and is still a fine old specimen. No more I cannot have her say a word affecting Mr. Herbert or what he may choose to do in the way of friendships ladies or else. But about this being a particular matter I will speak to her. It is only in view of your own goodness to her in a nasty affair* I venture to ask you, as it were, to lead the way. Experience is what S. is lacking though she thinks herself so up to date. This between you and me. Mr. Herbert is Mr. Herbert, he is friends with all the world. It is just his habit to be so, and even French I should think would follow it, specially seeing how kind and particular he was to her, that day we all had at Cowes.

Iveagh to Herbert.

Thanks for congrats. I am not sorry for a while to be done with the sea. Let it be clearly understood I will not have Bess to the dancing, or anywhere else that man would touch her and myself not there. I have heard a little truth of Crawford since I landed. Tell her I will come to her when I have time, it depends on the little horse, and Janet. No, do not tell her this, I am writing and will arrange it.

I shall have work with that girl,† to get the truth to her, and I have the deuce's own inclination this minute to write. Then you or he could dish it up for her. I might have forgotten a little how to talk to women,

* Steenie ?

† His sister-in-law.

though to be sure that one is straight. She shall have what she asks and when she asks it, but I had rather anyone else was the messenger. A man who can't work and can't play had better be dead, but you would not tell his sister that. I am sorry for the girl he is engaged to.*

As for the match, I may or may not be playing, but if I am not, tell Oxborough Tim will. Even if those asses don't kill the animal before I get to it, there is no point in two of us stopping out. You will kindly point out to my brother that in this way he is still one to the good by my coming, and that not improbably a better than myself. He was always shaky on arithmetic.

He may even be two to the good, since if I was playing, I would feel driven to whack the ball, on general principles, at Stephen's head. . . .

The Same to his brother, on a postcard.

What on earth has come over Joyce that she asks me for four dances? I have wired I am agreeable, but would like to be warned of the game.

[The Duke's answer to the above had better be spaced, since correspondence between brothers is truthful. It may be noted in extenuation that they both knew Joyce from infancy.]

She has spared us the trouble of applying to you. She is at the worst of a girl, outrageous, and what is more, she means to have Steenie yet. . . . You are in the happy position of the fresh man. There is no more than that in it, until you go against her. You

* Joyce.

are new to her eyes, and may be out of the know, or with luck she can manage to blind you. She is a pretty girl. She will be worse to handle, this time, than the horse itself that laid you down at Montevideo, the interesting occasion when you did not get kicked. It is likely she will make love to you steadily . . . and Mother means to be there. I would as soon be flattered by a Bengal tiger, just now, as Joyce. You should hear the music alone she makes; there is hunger in it, and hatred for the whole of us, as is natural. . . . Her sisters of course are no good, and Janet, poor woman, a little tired of his failures lying over the world. Joyce may well be the worst of these, for things with her go deep. There is more in her, being an artistic girl, than in Laura, or in Linda Monk. Madeleine I have not met at present, though I give it for what it is worth that Joyce did her utmost to prevent her stopping for the dance. My duchess out-managed her, having the luck to know the schoolmistress, and Joyce is sulky since. She will now, you observe, be overlooked by a little girl, to whom she would be a model, naturally. It may be unwise, of Janet. A nice lot they are . . . Herbert says these years have been hard on girls. I cannot see why he limits it, seeing Jane has not got her vote as yet. . . . More be token, if you fall foul on the way of my other brother Crawford, I am not concerned with it. I dare say Shere will second you if it comes to the point. I stand out in my best style, taking care of my wife, and you are here to relieve me. Or rather you are not here, bad cess to you, so instead of saying the obvious, I am forced to write indecently. How is your temperature with the nice bog-air, my little boy, and are you ever coming back to us? Jamesie and I

are stuck here in the correct attitude, but can't keep it up for ever. I am under fire, as I write, of his disturbing eyes. . . .

The Duchess to the Same.

MY DEAR IVEAGH,

I am more sorry than I can say, treating you like this, and I cannot even now explain how it happened. It is exactly as if we had plotted to prevent your seeing her. It is not that we do not want her, or that Sophie and I have not both done all we could. It comes of our selfishness, which is extreme, and his relief, and your being so reliable. And her shyness of course a little, only we could with a decent effort have got over that. We must have you at Holmer, and at once, there is no other way of it. You must fag for him like old times, and forget you are married, please. I feel quite humiliated by such bad management, but still see no way of putting it right. . . .

Suir to his wife, extract.

Janet sounds tired, the way she greets me, only you may be sure she never fails. He owns himself she is thin, and small wonder, the life she has, and the kids, and the conscience of the woman, and that fellow to crown it. If I were you, I would tell her she does too much. From me it might come badly. . . . You go easy, as I told you, and come to the park gate on Saturday night. I will do my best with the girls and so on not to be late. It is convenient your being so close, and for the very night, and an odd thing all three

of us should have had the same idea.* You can see the cricket out of the garden of that house, no point at all in your moving beyond it. Besides I may not be playing, and Tim's not much to see. . . . Never mind what Herbert says, I have heard enough of him, these are my own arrangements. . . . I will send the boy to you if I can dodge it, or you to him with better luck, but if I cannot you will have to wait. You are used to it. . . . Do not believe his talk against this place, there is none anywhere in the whole world like it. This shivering I have is only a little that was left over from my last bout at the Canal. . . .

[The Canal I judge, with an awful effort, to be Panama, probably. Owing to Iveagh's pestilential habit of never naming things or persons if he can avoid it, I refuse to go bail. S. H.]

The Duchess to her brother.

Steenie, listen: Is it through laziness, or something else, you are letting Joyce go? Or do you mean to goad her into breaking it off,—because she never will. Never, never: she is not the kind to. Ask Bess if you disbelieve me. You will have to do it yourself, aloud,—and you know how that is regarded in our society,

JANET.

Stephen, to the Duchess.

DEAR J.,

Jolly encouraging you are, but you needn't bother. A girl like that is fit to look after herself. That is what I object to, partly, that she goes rather far for me, knows too much, and is a bit above herself,

* The three includes Bess's hostess.

all told, with the attention she has picked up lately. I don't care for it, and made it clear. She will just splash about now, for the show's sake, and finish decently. For all her love of the police-courts,* I don't suppose she will drag me in. Don't you go putting fresh ideas into her, just when she is settling. Do you hear? And don't say a word to your sister-in-law concerning us, or—I'll cut loose.

S. K. C.

The Duchess, at once.

My dear, please believe me! You say Joyce knows too much. She knows nothing, barely anything, of all a man and a gentleman would teach her, take my word. Her knowledge is all swept up, superficiality,—what you call swank. She makes the best of it, in self-defence, they† have to; but she would sooner be defended. So would they all. She is clever, of course, she is sensitive, passionate, too much so,—she is fond of you. She will take it hard if you shirk, Steenie, it would be shocking. Tell me you will stand to your engagement.

J.

Stephen,—a lazy scrawl.

If she cuts up she may be quiet a bit. Don't jaw anyhow, J., your husband does that.

Janet, after a pause.

I am waiting for an answer from my brother: that was a cad. If *that* is so, I take my stand with her, as a woman I am bound to. I should ask you, as she will

* W.S.P.U.

† The Emancipated.

do, to send my last letters back,—but I hope I am mistaken. [Added in a corner.] Anyhow, do not punish her if you are tired of me.

J.

[He sent back the letters, and she looped together the little correspondence. She was four years older than Stephen (says Herbert) I think. Neither I nor the Suirs ever doubted her deep love for him. Four years is enough to be and remain the elder sister, careful and weariful, throughout a life.]

Joyce to Stephen.

What about that walk I mentioned by moonlight? Are you afraid? I should have thought you would have learnt at an agent's office to answer letters. A paid agent, and such a one,—even in Ireland, where they are always popular, I understand you did it in style. However, I have an answer, and pretty smart, from the one at present in occupation. He wants the first four which is fairly cool, but I have not said no. I suppose you know who I allude to? You had better catch him, hadn't you, before I make him tell me tales.

Sophie to Francis.

My dear, my heart, we shall go out, it may be permitted! Mr. Pelham spoke to the Duchesse when I could not attempt. Never I cannot pronounce your name, and with the Duchesse above all I am interloquée. It is so wonderful to be to see you. I will see you soon. And beneath the skys, at night, all the country to us. Do you understand this, English man, que je ne suis plus moi, que je ne me reconnais pas, depuis que l'a-

mour de toi m'a prise. Why to be quiet on this subject? Is it not, for us only two, the glory of the world?

Stephen to Joyce.

Suir answers letters, does he? Answers,—can't be much coolness, then, in taking what was offered him first. You give yourself away, you know, writing so hastily, though the idea was good enough at starting. I own I don't care for the man. My reasons for it, though, being on public grounds, would not appeal to you. Suir is one of the hole-and-corner Irish, skulking, slippery, how I bar the breed. Wickford has a bit of it, but he's worse. And they may talk of going back on his brother, but you should see the way the people regard him there. He's just the stuff of which turn-coats are made. You would see if it came to war. And of course he neglects his wife. I have nothing else against him; and what I have is best kept dark. You can give me two of his dances, if you like, I dare say it would relieve him. By the way, do you think that little sister of yours would give me two?

Joyce to Stephen.

All right, curse you, I cheat him and do as you tell me. He is a much better man than you. Oh, Stephen, aren't you coming round?

[The terrible passion of this remains unanswered, Mr. Crawford finding other interests as the match approached. There is reason to think he took, by degrees, to his sister's kind thought of cricket for his amusement. Simultaneously Suir, urged by the irresistible, changed his plans.]

Aileen, in capitals.

Uncoo Ples (come) Bisciut cry dying Ailie.

Kells to the Dowager Duchess. The author seems to be practising a business style.

DR GRANDMOTHER

Nurse says I am to say that as Mother isnt here we'll be delighted to see you on Thursday inst. next the Carriage to meet you as per yours but perhaps I wont. There is Cricket Practise. Uncle I. comes with luck late Friday inst. next so youll see him. Telgrm encl'd.

Yr. affec. gr. son

KELLS.

The Same to Jamesie.

Oh Bother !! Grandmother is coming too soon and spoiling everything. I had such lots to tell you our Secret and Uncle Steenie making nets for Practise said I could help. Now Nurse says Politeness and no Corner chattring. Oh bother she may bring chocolate love to Aunt Bess.

Miss Christina Johnstone (Nurse) to Lady Iveagh Suir.

I do not know how far you wish Jamesie to join with the gentlemen's amusements. It seems young for him to begin. Kells I cannot easily keep from his uncle, who has set up a place to practise batting in the far corner of the poney's field. Mr. Crawford has been coming down almost nightly with Captain Shere and a man I am told is a professional. He, at least, is not

company the Duke would wish Kells to keep. Kells is at the pains to quote him, and that quoting of his is already a trick I am trying to discourage. It may well damage his originality. Besides it cannot do the like of him good practising, even if it comes to playing, which I doubt. The stable-men are down there too, and they get Tim away from his duty much oftener than the Duke would like. Not that I wish tale-bearing and luckily Lord Iveagh will put an end to that. But in the mean time a word from your Ladyship to Mr. Crawford concerning Jamesie might open the way, if you think it suitable. More would hardly be required, as Kells would soon follow in his cousin's wake.

Yours faithfully,

C. T. JOHNSTONE.

[This document was not answered, for obvious reasons. Nurse, for all her diplomacy, did not know the circumstances. Lady Iveagh's son wrote to her on arrival, proving that a solution had been discovered without her. Only first—]

The Duke to Pelham, marked 'private,' and annotated by Herbert 'I should think so!'

See to Lord Iveagh, will you? I can do without you here. He will perhaps get in to Holmer late to-night without touching town, since that is his new arrangement. He will be done with the racket beyond, and not well with it, and my mother is there. I'll get down in time to-morrow.

W.

Jamesie to Lady Iveagh.

OH MOTHER,

Biscuit is dying and so I told Kells people who knew him do not play cricket and games. So Kells didnt. Oh dear it is an awful feeling and Uncle Steen laugfed when I told him. Mother they will shoot him Tim says it is crulty not and the animal in that pain. And Biscuit cant talk Mother. But I said it was Cowardly been angry and then Tim said he hoped I'd speak for him having done his best. Oh dear so I just tell you.* This night there were 2 gunshots when I listened but perhaps it wasnt. Mother darling will you make him a carving for his grave if he dies, long like the Greek Chariots? I didn't tell Aileen about the gunshots. She is young, Nurse says, to understand abt Death.

She answered this.

I have found a beautiful drawing for Biscuit, but better than the friezes, because the horse in mine is winged. That makes it an idea at once, which battles are not. If he dies, I will model a winged poney for Kells, a faithful promise. And shooting, darling, is a very easy death. I mean shooting such as Tim or Father would take care of, with such a beautiful horse. You can absolutely trust them, absolutely. I hope you remember sometimes that Kells is host, so he is the person to propose things. And to talk in French to Sophie.

[This shut Jamesie up, for he never by any chance remembered that Kells ought to propose things, taking the lead instinctively and invariably, as his father did.

* This is Jamesie.

The point of French, however, came as an interesting reminder of his accomplishments, as the next document in the dossier shows.]

Jamesie to Denise Monteil, Paris.

CHÈRE DENISE

Je vous écris de Holmer ou mon oncle habites, et Sophie ne m'aides pas beaucoup. Un cheval est mourant malheureusement. Son nom est Oatmeal Biscuit parce que de son couleur pâle-brune. Nous l'avons aplé* le premier jour que Kells l'a été donné. Sophie est française elle va marier Francis. Vous aimez le Mariage alors je mentione cela. C'est un secret particulier. Mother n'est pas ici, mais Grand-mother est malheureusement. Elle n'est pas comme votre. Je vous envoie mon amour, Mademoiselle, et à Madame du Frettay mon compliment.

JAMES CONNELLAN SUIR.

[This perfect specimen of the Irish gentleman was instantly answered in equal style.]

DEAR JAMESIE,

We have been so glad with Grandmaman to receive your letter which consoles us. But what, no word of your Father? And my uncle waits! How long it seem since we have to meet, that is past like a dream. Life opens before us. My uncle aproved much your letter whose perfection is remarquable. Here and there a contresens but nothing enormous. See, let us be friends ever between the countries, that is à la mode. There is such surprise at the cours when I say I like the

* Called, or christened.

Englishmen. Yet that is exact, since you and your father are two, and the two are sympathetic. Your differences are agreeable, for except my uncle, the men of my family ! Let us leave the question and inscribe myself.

Very tenderly your friend,

DENISE.

[The next documents on record are two telegrams,—‘Es-tu là ?’ and ‘I am’ from Lord Iveagh at Holmer, the exchange of intimate friends. M. Gabriel du Frettay then wrote (so he declares) and voluminously: but the letter is missing, as are many of those to Suir, when not from his wife. And hers are hard to get for other reasons. Such things as he kept in his wandering life, he guarded jealously. Of his arrival in his old home (says Herbert) I have the choice of two accounts. Tim’s to his sister is the more ‘sympathic,’ but Sophie’s is so infinitely superior in style. Thus I translate her, and have some pleasure in consigning Tim’s effusion, filthily written and execrably spelt, to oblivion.]

Sophie, to her mother at Sèvres.

The duke’s brother, so much expected, has now arrived. An interesting horse being indisposed upon his brother’s premises, he goes there,—not to his wife. He passes the night with the animal, by preference. I am not joking,—listen !

I come down to the country, in advance, with M. Pelham: I to occupy myself with the masque-dress; for the ball, which is long put away and défraîchie probably, M. Pelham to occupy himself with milord Iveagh (quel nom) whose condition will be the same, presumably, since he has been travelling in tropical holes. In the train I lay before M. Pelham my idea of a man who

leaves his wife and exquisite child to travel after plants and insect horrors in bottles, and obliges her to paint to earn money for the household in his absence. *Bon !* Though well-advanced, my idea is not acceptable. M. Pelham will have none of it, since his duke, it appears, is devoted to this only brother. He says milord is very clever, very decided in his judgements, that her Grace his mother, equally a dominating spirit, is jealous of his influence, and *enfin*, that he absents himself in part, M. Pelham thinks, not to embroil the family. *Bon !* It is also well-stated, of its kind. I keep an open mind towards each view, and proceed to investigation. Personal, hein ? Since I have François, is it not my duty to study his compatriots ?

Milord, from the moment of his arrival, makes himself remarked. I observe it. He has an effect upon Tim, the groom, unheard-of, so reducing. I am witness, in the kitchen, of Tim's efforts among us to restore his amour-propre. These Irish are singular types, yet engaging. I tease Tim a little, and he responds,—much. There seems, despite the scenes they make together invariably, to be an understanding between him and his master.

Next arrives Green, from the dining-room. There milord has quarrelled with M. Crawford across the dinner-table, and drawn upon himself the reproaches of his mother for impoliteness, and Green, endeavouring to inform us of it, curls up.* Here they do not greatly care for M. Crawford. Next, milord retires to sulk in the stable, announcing to the world his intention of watching till morning beside the beloved animal,—sooner than set eyes on M. Crawford again. M. Craw-

* Se tord.

ford, equally enchanted by the arrangement, repairs to the smoking-room, and immerses himself in the enjoyment of the duke's cigars.

Good. I think the situation of these gentlemen over, and discover in it a certain injustice, or inequality. Is milord, for all his caprices, not the brother of the duke? Who then should have that tobacco? I outline my idea of equality to M. Pelham, who reproves me. He says I have too many equal ideas. Perhaps I am in happy spirits because I shall see François, who knows? Yet remark, I am divided by great fear of the stable, those horses, their stamping and their eyes. It horrifies me to see the little Aileen embrace them. What, as I say to Nurse, if the animal should bite? However, I sing a little tune to disregard M. Pelham, and I make a little turn, the duke's mother being in the drawing-room, in case, by chance, M. Crawford in the fumoir should be asleep. You are shocked, *ma petite mère*, by these disclosures? Yet observe: I am 'engaged,' English, for ever. Does that not give one independence? Perfectly so.

In the smoking-room, success! Behold M. Crawford, my acquaintance, beautifully elongated in sleep: and behold, the duke's tobacco-box on the table beside him. I take that tobacco-box. Outside the door again, I recommence my little tune. He would have been so pleased, so pleased to see me,—had he known!

In the stable, deception, on the contrary! You will say it serves me right. First, it is dirty, filthy, repugnant! When my idea arrived to me, I had not thought of that. For a week, do you see, it is a horse-hospital,—and Tim not naturally clean. Picture a gentleman,

a duke's brother, in such environment,—no ! Equality, say I, but, for example, not with the beasts !

Milord Iveagh differs with me. He had no attention for me, not the slightest, he was at his affairs. He had his horse, gazing at it. He found the large eyes of Biscuit more attractive,—*bon !* Only when I spoke he turned his head, and I saw how sulky, cross like a schoolboy, cherishing the relics of his wrath with Tim. He saw me, to be sure: and also the reason of my disturbing him, possibly. Bah, je me fiche of his ideas. I prefer my François, so innocent, so English, so imperceptive ! He is not handsome at all, to be the father of M. Jamesie, our adorable. He is not large, to be so dominating,—nor old, indeed. I saw he must have married very young. He is like his brother, undistinguished. François is ten times better-looking. M. Herbert himself is, at least in the face.*

He took the tobacco I presented him, not thanking me. He was smoking already, a cigar of Tim's. How vulgar, when my sense of equality had discerned for him the duke's cigarette-box ! However, he took it, he did not refuse. Following that favour, he made use of me, to fetch something for his requirements: and he directed me sharply not to step on one place in the straw. And there was a gun there, loaded,—oh, the horror ! He will shoot the poor creature, choose his minute and shoot it, when it counts upon him. One saw its great eyes seeking milord, remembering him, yes, loving him marvellously. And its thin sides all wet, panting, shivering, suffering of course. I did not know horses could be ill, like humans. . . . Now I have come away from them, I cannot forget. It has un-

* Oh, Sophie !

nerved me, I cannot say: the determination, the severity. I have decided it is not right to capture, in that way, the friendship* of an animal. It is not according to religion, very probably. His wife could not approve of it, I am sure. Still, I am content that I filched† the tobacco-box, because he has more claim to it than M. Crawford, who makes his sister cry. And I am glad he has appeared at last, for *ce petit chou*‡. And also, though I write to you very late, dear mother, morning almost, I have not heard the gun. . . .

Iveagh to Nurse, carried by Pelham.

Done the trick. Tell her.—IVEAGH SUIR.

Aileen, to Biscuit, helped by Nurse.

Jim and Ailie so glad you are weller dear come soon.

A. E. S.

Nurse, to her sister in a London hospital.

I wish her Grace would let the children alone. They have been perfectly good since Jamesie got here on Wednesday, finishing their Programme, and it is nice work for both, painting and printing, and the will already there to do their best. I have said nothing intentionally beyond taking an interest and a word at times, and Lord Iveagh when he came up as serious. That arms Jamesie painted is the best he has done. You should see his hand, as steady, and sitting straight to it, no tongue out, as I tell Kells. Let alone, they teach one another,

* Amitié.

† Chiper.

‡ Jamesie.

which is the safest way of teaching there is, as it comes natural. . . . But do you suppose her Grace can find a word to say for it? Titles and nonsense at their age, Kells was half crying when he came upstairs. I told him on my own his mother would like it better as he made it first. So she would, poor little things, with the pains they took, and the trouble about the poney already they have had. . . . Lord Iveagh has saved that poney's life, both vets said must be shot yesterday. Sitting up with it, Masters said, fomenting and feeding it like an infant. But he was always a wonder with horses, and a way with him—I have more than a doubt if that young Hickson will get his bill paid now. . . .

[The next document is appropriately Kells' Programme, the subject of so much intense and secret confabulation. It was enclosed and commented upon, in a letter from the Dowager Duchess to a family friend at the upper end of Egypt, with whom she preserved a full, stately, and most publishable correspondence. The Duke's mother was, needless to say, a more notable figure than either of her sons, and kept them and their households well under criticism. The only point where her attitude weakened—it is not uncommon in grandmothers—was towards the new generation, and especially the heir of the house; though it is clear by copious evidence she never let Kells discover it.

The programme was really a creditable work of art, given the age of the pair who composed it, just under and just over seven. More, it was a labour of love, being for 'mother,' the mother of the printer. It was strenuously spelt, with much consultation of authority, and only quite a few of the letters were wrong way round. Finally, it was illuminated, and 'goldened,' with Jame-sie's mother's gold paint. The edition de luxe, of which the dowager owned one, was limited to four copies, strictly.]

HOLMER CRICKET AFTERNOON, 1914.

30TH ANNIVERSARY DUCHESS J. OF WICKFORD'S
BIRTHDAY.

*Done by Kells (Rt. Hon. K.C.B. etc.) assisted by J. C.
Suir (Hon. F.L.S., R.A. etc.)*

2.10. Special Train.

2.45. Cricket Match, men left hand, ladys right, Captains
Elevens Rev. Canon Oxborough, Blue Oxford,
Miss Madcap Pennant, Schools England challenge
shield.

4.30. Tea. (Half-time.)

7. Supper (people under 16)

7.45. Dinner (other people)

9. Mask Ball, characters any, uniforms aloud, no
dogs or children under 3 by order, Kells.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

The Dowager, to Sir George Trenchard.

You see how we are engaged. My grandson's details are so exact, that I feel further comment is superfluous. The only note I need add is that none of the times were kept. Fortunately Lionel is here to keep me in countenance, otherwise, I must have flinched, for fashion is increasingly for the eccentric, and it leads even rational people to do extraordinary things. Janet, I uphold, is rational: it is her strongest quality. She is, most plain to see, a rock, amid the excitable, hysterical girls of the period, who do their best to draw her in their wake. But, suffragette as she calls herself, playfully, she has always known where to stop,—of course her position

helps her. She and I are very much in agreement, as soon as we come to talk seriously; and it makes it the more astounding to see the flood of sheer nonsense, of sheer froth, that a woman of any wealth and style has to deal with nowadays. It was a little to observe this side of things, and rather against my son's inclination, that I came down to her birthday celebrations.

Fortunately I was prepared, by some knowledge of the world we live in. I think of you, and what you would have felt. And it is the women, I own it; I often think the majority of the men are bored. My sons are not, of course, nothing frivolous bores them: the Irish quality adapts itself to the outré, to the indecent, I am inclined to say. My elder son is better than he used to be: one may say marriage has done something for him, and it is probably not his fault that not the smallest grain of respect is shown him by the girls. These Pennants, a quartette whom you may remember, make fun of him and Janet openly, of their domesticity; and the married one, Mrs. Monk, is of course the worst. (She is the Rosalind I used to be so nervous about, with Wickford.) I do not think their origin is anything remarkable, but they specialise in what we now call vitality, and what we used to call by another name. I am inclined to say the youngest is the best-bred: there is hope for her, at least, as she comes from a good school. However, she seems perfectly able to deal with men. This is the Madcap of the programme; I told Kells, too late, that nicknames should not be used. She is a tall child, plays exactly like a boy in pads, with nothing to call a skirt, and her sleeves rolled up, and she is burnt almost as brown as Iveagh. Of course Lionel adopted her. I saw him with his arm round her, when she was finally bowled out,

explaining to her how she should have avoided it. This was all very well, and acceptable no doubt, but, though Lionel made a very good score for his age, this Pennant child doubled it. She soared across the century, as Herbert poetically said, and hit Iveagh's and Lionel's bowling all about the place. It was really extraordinary to see the men,—grown men,—debating how to get rid of her. Then Herbert's footman bowled her, providentially. It may be the old Adam in me, George, but I cannot see the men of my house, even left-handed, beaten by a pack of Pennants. The stable-men in, the field started a round of applause as she walked out, and they did it again when she shook hands with Lionel at the end, very nicely, with a wide smile. She is as ridiculously pretty as her sisters, though their smiles, having practice, are less open-mouthed. Of course the girls were beaten, finally.

[Herbert divides the letter at this point, in order to insert the scores.]

The Ladies' Score, by St. John Herbert.

The Duchess, a trim 20, caught and bowled the Duke, most appropriate.

Joyce, a tolerable 12, muckered others, bowled Francis on sight.

Linda Monk, a duck, called by Shere 'suitable.' Bowled Francis.

Laura, an indescribable 8, missed twice by Iveagh, and caught by Shere.

Trix Adler, a transatlantic 23 (can't keep up this alliteration). Caught rather nicely by Wickford. Bowled Iveagh.

Jeannette, a painful incidental 8, what I mean is the Canon and the umpire differed. l.b.w. Bowled Iveagh.

[Interval for hair-dressing. All the field lay down.]

Sophie, a French 6. Fell over wickets. Bowled Francis. Miss Kitchin, 0. Disqualified for trying to kill Kells.

Lettice, a touching twain. Caught Author, who is good for something. Bowled Francis as usual.

Sybil, an English 18, entirely to leg, stuck in the whole time, and would be there to-morrow, were it not for the cows.

Madeleine, 104, five fours, ten threes, bowled Iveagh, Oxborough, Timothy, yea Francis. Finished Francis. Side out.

Total audited and re-audited, 201.

The Men's Score, by Miss Adler.

Captain Oxborough, 54. Caught Sophie, bowled Mad. Stephen, 30. Caught Sybil, full-length.

Wickford, 12. Run out. Very good-tempered.

Kells, 0. Too bad. Bowled Laura, I think.

Herbert, 0. Why, what shall I say? Bowled Laura.

Shere, 7. Bowled Maddie, certainly.

Iveagh, 58. Bowled Maddie. But of course he ought.

Masters, 5. All byes, owing to Linda flirting.

Pelham, 2. Bowled Linda, the only thing to do with her.

* Mr. Blakie, 156, not out, starred by Baedeker.

Tim, 60. Snubbed by Iveagh, for a reason you will see on comparing their scores.

The Dowager, in continuation.

The evening followed, and I should like to say a word for my daughter-in-law: she certainly did what she could. But nobody could have done anything with Iveagh. Iveagh has chosen to come back this time by way of Ireland, and has swept it all up again, accent and all,—I need not enlarge. He took the management right out of Janet's hands, and my son's also. The girls—well—and yet he did nothing, that anyone could see. He pretended to be ill, sat down by us and shivered at intervals. It was simply that the Pennant crew got worse as soon as he came near them, nothing but that. I appealed to Wickford to restrain him, and Wickford, looking quite comfortable, with Aileen on his knee, said—'What from?' So I said, low of course, I was glad Elizabeth was not present. And John Shere, who was sitting beyond me disguised in an apron or something said I should find few people to agree with me, and asked confirmation from young Crawford, who was playing with Kells. It is their letting the children in for such things that seems to me, to say the least, unnecessary. Kells has a terribly worldly-wise expression at times.

Well, at last Janet, pressed by me, took Iveagh to task. She said she did not want to, joking, but she perceived her duty, as Wickford did not. The girl is tired, certainly,—Elizabeth may be right she does too much. I wish she would drop some of these committees, but I have spoken of that. . . . Iveagh and she sat out a dance in her bedroom. This may be taken to illustrate Janet, who, though a particularly nice girl, is insensible in certain ways. I should almost say hard—let us call it stubborn. She thinks of one thing at a time. . . . That

room is the one that used to be mine: but having resources that I never had, she has enlarged it, thrown out a big bay on the garden, with a view of the park, the Avenue trees falling away to the left hand, very prettily. Characteristically, she keeps the windows wide open,—wide,—I have heard her maid, who is foreign, complain of the draught. Well, I do not know why I tell you all this, unless to account for Janet, illustrate her as it were, since she is important to us: and also, that you remember the old place, and will feel with me for any changes, even for the better. Let me proceed.

She came out after a very long time, at least two dances, and having a good chance, I spoke to her, for I really thought she had been unwise. She forgets that eyes are on her. I said very little, so far as I remember, giving her plenty of excuse, saying it might be Iveagh's undoubted resemblance to her own husband misleads her at times. Well, on any ordinary occasion her frankness would have accepted it, certainly, and as it was meant. She is frank, breezy,—a draughty northern girl. But no,—she flamed out, and told me, first, she would let nobody but her own mother speak to her of things like that; and next, that there was nowhere else in the house to be quiet, which was certainly true. But why should she need to be quiet? And then she said he was her brother, and turned away. But he is not,—Stephen is. Would she, I asked, have done that same with Stephen?

She cried. I had not the least intention of making her, in fact I could not have conceived it. She is certainly not herself. She took Aileen from Wickford to conceal it, but he saw, and it is probable the child did too. I may have done wrong to speak. It is a common-

place that the Scotch nature, which looks hard, is sensitive, just as my sons' Irish nature, which looks soft, can be as stiff as nails. I did not at all want to hurt Janet. She is an excellent wife. And he is very fond of her, I am glad to say. However, when I tried to explain he passed me over, laying it no doubt, as I was inclined to do, to other things.

The Duchess of Wickford, to the Countess of Kirkcudbright.

[Herbert had great difficulty in getting this valuable letter.]

MOTHER DARLING, MY OWN:

It is late, or early, but I must write to you. The house has gone to sleep. My babies are safe, tucked up, my youngest with his arms above his head, correctly,—do you ever, in these days, think of yours?

I have your youngest here, Mother, I am sticking to him. I shall stick to him till he kills me, as I sometimes think he means to do. Oh, he is brutal, yes, to me,—he has learnt nothing, nothing, from all the women he has known. And yet he has known such splendid ones, really, beginning with you and finishing with Bess. You have seen my artist sister-in-law, haven't you? And Joyce, in this house, is another girl with deep depths in her, things quite out of his reach. I hope we have persuaded her to go to Germany, and find in music some of what she has lost in him. But for a girl like Joyce, meant for marriage and the intensities, it is such a second-best.

Well, it is all true. Conor's brother told me the truth of it in this room this evening. It may be he has told Conor other things, but I think he has not—they are both

so sorry for me. They are respectful for my shame. You see, mother, they are honourable men. Gentlemen I am sick of, the servants use it. And there are honourable men, just dealers, among my servants, and there are true lovers too. My maid had the choice of Steenie and one of these, and she has chosen rightly. An honest girl, a clever girl, knows by looking in Steenie's eyes. Passion itself stops in time. He has no faith in him, he has no honesty with himself or God, he has no courage, mother. Women find that out.

It is not only that Steenie has left undone in Ireland, scamped every duty he ought to perform, picked up people of his own sort to play with, and spy-hunted, as they called it, inventing charges like schoolboys, playing with fire, as Conor rightly said. He has not the least idea of the present real dangers, true problems, in the other island, which my man and others are working at, frantically, night and day. He was desperately indiscreet, and silly, made bitter enemies for all of us, and tired his own friends at last. But it is not only that, nor even that he cannot be trusted with women—that we know, alas. He cannot be trusted with *money*, mother. Do not tell father ever, but it is the shameful fact.

They say, these two who are so kind to me, that the money is mine. Can you not see him saying that, the man I married? Giving me back the money to give to Steenie—but no. There is something in me will not take that pretty argument, made to console me, to tuck me up with consolation by their nice eyes. It is not only man and wife, my goods being Conor's. It is a much deeper-set thing in me, which I see beginning to strive in my canny son as well. I tried to explain it to Kells last Sunday, with Steenie in mind. There are official

proprieties, on earth: in some things we are all soldiers, obeying little laws, hemming us in, by way of practice, when the great call comes, for the worse test of letting ourselves go. Have I put that clearly? I don't think my boy followed quite, but you are cleverer! Stephen is a bad soldier—a bad, bad soldier—it is fearful to say so, in our family. I tremble really lest father should see this. Yet it is my strongest feeling. His life is full of loose stitches. It was such a chance for him, such a chance, my generous man gave him: interesting work, fascinating place and people, an income plentiful even for him. And all he could find to do was back-bite and cheat and amuse himself at others' expense. Iveagh sat here, facing me in my own room, and told me so. . . .

The Servants' Hall, to Miss Madeleine Pennant.

MISS MADELEINE,

Your congratulations, Miss, to Tim and Blakie are very acceptable, and we wish to have the honour of drinking your health. It will follow the Duchess's, as you will readily understand, being her anniversary which the Duke allows. Your playing, if I may say so Miss, and accepting of defeat far from deserved personally, does honour to an English education, and we wish long life to you, and many more Centuries hereafter to the credit of your Bat.

Mr. Herbert helped in this.

(Signed) A. J. PELHAM.
FRANCIS BLAKIE.

DANIEL MASTERS.
TIM GEOGHAN.

(Signed additionally)

WICKFORD.
SHERE.
KELLS.
S. K. CRAWFORD.

LIONEL OXBOROUGH.
ST. JOHN HERBERT.
IVEAGH SUIR.

Canon Oxborough, to the Rev. Frank —.

DEAR FRANK,

I know the evolution of our younger world interests you, and no one is more aware than you how very careful one must be about putting in an oar. I have had the opportunity here of assisting at, and I trust helping in, a peculiarly delicate situation. My tack in such circumstances is to go quietly, and preserve an easy appearance: not 'knowing,' which is hopeless with our young gallants, but equable; above all, not to let myself be taken aback. The habit of 'scoring,' especially over one's elders and betters, prevails exceedingly. My sister Gertrude, a clever woman of her own date, does fairly well, but she is too much given to taking the pedestal. Thus confidences are granted me, and constantly, which never come her way.

My nephews, being of the blood you know—there is very little of their mother in them—let things run with singular recklessness. The result was, to put it shortly, we sailed uncommonly near the wind. How near, to bloodshed even, I know from Wickford this morning, but I had more than a winged hint or two in my pastoral bag last night.

The day started with cricket—I believe I mentioned these young women had persuaded me to bend my aged back above a bat again. It was like old days, and I knocked up a decent fifty, on a pitch nobody had taken the trouble to put in order, since the fixture was regarded as a farce. The girl bowling was a remarkably pretty, capable little (etc.) dressed like a Diana, and fairly deadly once she had found her length. She bowled Jack Shere, a far from incapable player, at the third ball,

and Jack's face was really amusing to see when it took place. I punished her, since it was my duty, and my great-nephew ran for me when I could no more. I was only out by a miracle, as you must grant, the ladies' maid (French) happening to hold the ball.

The heroine of our modern drama was the young Diana's sister, a girl I did not especially observe till she came down to dinner dressed. The women on the field were fitly clad, and pleasingly, in white to match the men. From that minute I was prepared for other changes—yet scarcely for all that appeared. I had already been told she was a Suffragette, and supposed her the ordinary Rampant—but there was more than that. Something had gone wrong; it seemed to me she had lost something, some elementary control, which one takes for granted in a woman in well-bred society. The kindest reading is that she was really not responsible, and I believe my nephew now inclines to that. It is true she had a grievance, if you may call it so. My hostess's brother, a handsome young rascal, who turned up in the trappings of his Training Corps, had lately thrown the girl over, or threatened to—a painful situation, but one which as a rule appeals to a woman's pride. Alas, pride is far to seek in the sisterhood nowadays. She tried first to pique him, by attending to others, freely. Then, seeing him dancing with her sister a second time, she suddenly lost her head, and threw expressions about that she may have learnt street-preaching with the community. We grew indignant. The poor little girl had done nothing. I warned my nephew to take steps.

Later, his son and heir, a bright youngster, had been telling me in great detail the history of his horse's illness

—of course all Wickford's olive-branches ride. It seemed they had been on the point of destroying it the day before, but my younger nephew turned up and saved it. . . . About here, I became aware of Miss J——gazing fixedly at us, across the bay of the ballroom where some of us had retired to rest. (The dance, like the cricket which preceded it, was vaguely described as a 'rag,' and rest was occasionally needful, even for the young and healthy. Thus you can imagine what it was for young Herbert, who is delicate,* and me.) J—— is a girl of almost indecorous beauty, with a gay pink colour, quite natural, red lips, and the most wonderful eyes. I had hardly observed her eyes before, till I met them in this manner. Her head lay back, her arms along the chair, her look transfixed as though she would have mesmerised us, very singular.

'Poor little fellow,' she said dreamily. 'Beauty, isn't he? Will you take me down to see?'

'All right,' says Kells.

'You'll get a spanking if you do,' I said avuncularly. I had heard my nephew particularly forbid him to go near the stable.

'J——won't,' says Kells. Little imp!—he was aware, of course, of an audience.

'How do you know that?' says Shere, and so on. The girl lay listening in the same attitude, and with the most absolute ease. As soon as I saw a chance I moderated Jack, who is a good fellow, but runs a joke to death when he gets it. I explained to him the horse was a fine one, and Iveagh, my nephew in question, quite right to run no risks.

'But he's Kells', isn't he?' says the girl. She looked

* I am not.

like a siren, eyes half shut. 'Will you take me, Kells?—and save me from the dragons—the dreadful dragons? After all, he belongs to you.'

'Yes, Biscuit's mine,' says Kells; but he looked doubtful. The spanking was something more than visionary, in his case. Finally, he jumped up. 'I'll take you, come along,' he says, raffishly.

Well, I let them go, because I did not believe he would do it. Wickford's children are in order. But presently Iveagh himself came down, and I began to realise, by the storm of chaff that fell upon him, the rights of things. This is Gertrude's younger son, the traveller and tropical botanist, regarded by her as something of a *mauvais sujet* formerly but developed and even distinguished since. He was and is a mighty pretty rider—elegant, to use their own jargon. Unhorsed and brought to earth he is an odd boy, a little rough, but no harm in him as I have long proved. He is rather fond of me.*

'She's doing it to annoy,' he observed in my direction. 'Tim won't let them past. I placed him.'

'Oh, won't he?' said Jack. 'You should have seen her. You'll not deny Timothy has a heart?'

'Then,' says Iveagh, 'it'll be the worse for him.' And he sat down by me.

'Not J——?' Jack chaffed. 'Oh, do give it J——. Why, she was asking for it, wasn't she, sir?' I regret to say he appealed to me.

My nephew seemed uninterested. We fell into family conversation apart, to which he presently attached his own little boy. When the latter was leaving us, I said to him quite carelessly—'I am glad your father did not have to shoot the poney.'

* This is true.

"Who spoke of shooting?" said my nephew at once. He is not much of a talker, and had been letting the child do it for him. It is an especially attractive child, and Iveagh likes 'scoring' with it over his brother's offspring when he can. (My Irish nephews 'play' their children against one another, publicly: they are a comical pair.)

I told him Kells had done so lately; and proceeded, relaxing a little at the boy's departure, to an anecdote of a horse of mine. Iveagh interrupted me, to my surprise. He asked, did the girl hear?

'Miss J——? Hear about the shooting? Well, she was sitting just over there.'

He considered a moment, looking about him. 'I'd better see to it,' he remarked audibly; and amid a roar of laughter from Shere and company, he left the room.

Ten minutes later again, I observed Master Kells slip by me on the staircase, and he was crying. I tried to stop him, but he fled. Experience, alas, had pointed the moral from which his great-uncle refrained.

[There is plenty more of Oxborough, says Herbert, but I abandon him, with excuse, for others. He evidently thought as he chatted with his friend, he had fathomed everything at the moment. As a matter of fact, he got little further than his sister, that night. He fathomed successfully, but it occurred the next morning, when both the Suirs took him in hand, with caution and courtesy befitting his dignified estate.]

Tim Geoghan, to St. John Herbert. Disgracefully dirty.

MR. HERBERT,

This is to tell you I am in fear of my life with his Lordship having knocked a couple extra in my score as you noticed, and cannot leave the Poney by

command this night. And here he sends me seeking his belongins with it, so what in the name of unreason will I do? Pleased as I am to serve I cannot be in two places, nor in such necessities as he plants upon me ast the undergrooms. It is unreason in him he being beside himself surly not getting to her as is quite to be understood. And yet he will have the head of me if he discovers wrong and the Ladies already disturbing us to look at the Animal women should know better tho nothing agst Miss Joyce. But if you please prevent Ld Kells bringing her with the nerves Biscuit has I would be thankful. And if you please lend me Blakie or wantin him come yourself for the intavel of time I am absent looking up the gerl.

T. GEOGHAN.

[If only, comments Herbert, all witnesses were as transparent as Tim, we documentaries would have an easier time of it. There was no doubt whatever who the 'belongins' and the 'gerl' were, for I tested Shere on the spot, and he said—'Oh, the devil, one for Joyce.' Yet of course we had to take Bess seriously, though we still inclined to the frivolous, not to say ribald, concerning the Pennants and Sophie. We had not yet seen through Joyce, or rather through Suir. Enlightenment in that quarter came later, see Janet.]

The Duke, to Kells, delivered by Lettice.

You go along to bed, I don't care to look at you. Sending Lettice to us after all this time, instead of coming at once yourself. I have you Mother's word for you it is unmilitary.

WICKFORD.

Kells to ——. Written three times with a very black pencil, on the wall-paper of his own room.

I hate him, Biscuit's mine.

Madeleine Pennant, to a school-friend.

[Herbert calls the following a fine example of true modesty and family form, and contrasts it favourably with Oxborough's.]

Well, of all seedy fixtures, between ourselves, and rotten shows on Joyce's part. I tell you I shall be glad to be out of this. I thought Joyce was ill when she fastened me to-night, she was shuddering like a leaf. But it was rage, pure and perfect rage—because I had not done what was expected of me. . . . My dear girl, I can't win a match against eleven men, even left-handed, all alone: especially on a rotten pitch, with all the rest spooning, and when one of the opposite eleven happens to be able to *play*. It does seem to me a bit stiff, but Linda seemed as sick as Joyce, very nearly, though I can't say Linda on the field did much to help. The natural result is I have had a sickening evening, and my head aches now so I can't get to sleep. Linda gave me a bottle of something, but you don't catch me, I'd smash it if I dared. I feel vicious, which proves it can't have been a decent match. Something was wrong with it and them. It was a beautiful ball that got me out. . . . There is an affectionate Churchman here, which of all things I bar, they always paw you. I should like to catch any other man trying it, but this happens to be the Duke's uncle. . . . The kids are topping simply, and one of them the handsomest child I ever saw. They

cut his hair American style, straight round his ears, and it flops when he runs. And can't he run just !—he ran for his great-uncle. He is the only one without a title, but they are quite common kids. I'd have stopped out to talk to them gladly. They are quite an ordinary family, so far as anyone can see, and on awfully good terms with one another; which really, after ours——! There were two uniforms to-night, three if you count the Duke, splendiferous to look at, and of course thinking a lot of themselves having it on. Don't tell Ann and Beaty, but sometimes, seeing the sort of man you meet about, I wonder how our soldiers would behave if it came to war. I enclose the testimonial the servants gave me, and I mark the signatures I most value. More you will not get out of me: but I hope, when I am Joyce's age, I shall be more just, that's all.

[Francis, Kells, Herbert and Iveagh, were the names Madeleine marked. She might have added Shere, who got very cleverly between her and Crawford. Linda, of course, failed her office utterly towards Madeleine, as she did towards Joyce.]

I proceed to Janet, again invaluable. She starts with a first-class portrait, having declared in preliminary that she cannot paint. Francis too—I was grateful to Meg Crawford for this letter.]

The Duchess, to her sister Meg.

We did the magnificent last night, and Iveagh took care of our dignity. The blessing to be done for, Meg, and when you have been dragged through the dust, as Steenie has dragged me lately! I have not had Conor's company, like that, for ages past. You remember my brother-in-law, don't you? if not I cannot help you.

Except for general adequacy, he does not matter the least. He simply disappears beside his wife, now a most beautiful woman. He has a little down-look, sneaking rather, but do not imagine shy, and he goes swinging about very lightly, as Conor (alas !) used to do. He has a horrible temper, no-particular manners, and the children trust him utterly. He addresses me as 'Duchess' nicely, and speaks of me as the woman or Jane. His own wife is the girl, that is the difference. It has made my husband years younger already having him.

I believe he saved us from awful things last night, or St. John did, though what I have not the least idea. Conor, who probably knows, is quite satisfied all is well this morning, though everybody else seems fagged. Iveagh informed me, the only time I caught him privately during the evening, that he had lost the trick of society, and felt out of it, the girls had gone so fast. But nobody would ever have guessed it. He had this frightful situation. (I am slowly realising how unfair it was.) Jealousy, awful: a girl jealous of her own sister, and that a little girl of sixteen. Well, a jilt, that was Steenie, and enjoying it, simply enjoying the suffering he had caused. I could see him, with my eyes shut, torturing. It was shocking—shocking because it was so sly. The little girl, heroine of the afternoon, conscious and half crying, in a cruel position—not one of the men could bear to see that. It was comical almost—they all came to me, one after another, and asked me to stop it—stop Steenie, you know.

Well, what else, for Iveagh? Oh yes, the most beautiful and wildest girl making rabid love to him—I really can put it no other way—and shocking his own poor

mother, who fell upon me! Once he came near me, looking for somebody, and I touched him, telegraphing as it were my doubts. 'Jolly, isn't it?' said Iveagh, looking extremely sneaking, with his eyes aside; threw a paper and a programme to St. John, and joined the rout again.

I had to leave it to him. I felt increasingly stupid, paralysed by something, it must have been fear. I think it was our brother's horrid calmness, a kind of slack contentment, trifling with the child and others; and the conviction within me, nevertheless, that the whole unhealthy turmoil turned upon him. He was not even drinking, last night, and Iveagh was, and Joyce against him—oh me, that girl! The parts were wrong, do you see, the presences anyhow. Steenie at his best looks so splendid, so appealing, not a figure on the field to-day to stand by him, unless that of the crack player, Herbert's man.

And that young cricketer stood near only to contrast with him, to drive the inevitable contrast home. I saw him once, while I was playing with Aileen, come into the hall. It surprised me, for an absurd reason: I had given Sophie most special leave to walk with him in the park. They are lovers, proper lovers, just engaged; and much, much more rigid about rendezvous than people like Steenie or Jack. I called him to me, having a chance, and I said as lightly as I could manage—'I hope you have not forgotten Sophie.' For Steenie makes one light-headed: one grows to think there is no such thing as faith or honour in the world. He said—'Oh no, your Grace, I have not forgotten her,'—with just a little bit of smile in speaking. The best kind of London English, you saw at once, good heart with a

touch of irony: the British lion in London, you know, is ironical, he smiles at himself. And off he went again, no doubt to keep his appointment. A *man*—the relief! . . .

[So much for the Duchess: now for the Duke.]

The Duke to——.

[Discovered on a ball of paper, covered with ghastly objects intended for horses, tightly gripped in his daughter's hand. Nurse, a precisian, returned it to Janet, who gave it to Herbert. He dates it 10.45, and marks it 'very significant.']

Look here, this is going beyond a——

Suir, to Herbert, being one of the documents Janet mentions, which fell directly from his hands into mine. It is scrawled on a half-sheet of note-paper.

She will do for him if this goes on. Put a guard on the gunroom, and send someone down to the pond.

[The other bit of evidence is a girl's programme, or note of dances, picked up presumably in the course of 'ragging,' with the phrase written across the top which finally opened our eyes. The language used, and the fact that it had been left for the public eye, would probably have been of interest to a doctor,—to one of those doctors of to-day who deal with hysteria in all its versions, but it is not publishable here. It served its turn on the spot: and passed to the Duke's safe charge, or safer destruction, probably.]

St. John Herbert, to the world at large.

Well, odd though it may appear, I took Suir seriously. I believed, first, that he would not so have written, if he had not been in sight of the end of his resources—which in itself means a good deal, for he is weirdly clever in the kind of game. And next, I noticed that he came to me from the direction of Janet, who was looking both ill and anxious. The terms between those brothers and their belongings, as Miss Madeleine had divined, were remarkably true and good—quite trustworthy. I did my best from that moment to back him as my hostess's proxy: though still, in the nature of things, he had all the stiffest work. Iveagh surprised me, I may say, as much as his own mother. I discovered the full depths of a quiet Irishman's capacity for flirting that night. Nor was my backing of much intrinsic value: since, owing to habit, I soon fell back on Francis.

Forgetting Francis's engagement, I set him, first, to find the keys of Wickford's gunroom, as the simplest way to guard it. He tracked them, by means of the butler, to the charge of Mr. Crawford: and from Mr. Crawford's gentlemanly pocket, into the void.

Francis to Herbert.

The missing one was in the stable, sir. His lordship has it. The keys may be anywhere. I won't lose sight of the door.

As for the rest of my directions, I went myself, as the person best to be spared from the dancing, down to the pond. I was prepared to think it foolish to go, but I went. I met Shere at the stairfoot, and stopped to give him a hint—he hardly needed it—and to send Janet a message, in case she missed me. Jack offered to go to the

pond instead of me, as it was raining: kind of him, all things considered: he is a good sort. Joyce—well, Joyce was something to him: not only as Linda's sister, but something apart. We laughed at Joyce and her causes a little, but she was the most gifted of our circle, by a long way: she was too startling, too streaming a little personality to be easily spared: even had not her immediate situation appealed to another instinct in us which need not be emphasised. Joyce, at her wildest, appealed by her simplicity. She had abandoned herself, in the case of Crawford, in the sight of all; we all took shares, in consequence, in her disappointment. It had to be so, even though she disdained it. Simultaneously, as Wickford wrote, she revolted against the lot of us. Let her revolt! Such was the first feeling of the Suirs: such was, or soon became, my own opinion. such, as soon as I had given him words for it, was Jack's. I thought of stationing him as guard on the guns, and letting off Francis. But then, I did not. Francis was safer, somehow: Francis was more utterly safe. Possibly I am a fool about Francis. So I just prepared a few lies, for Janet.

And at the very moment, we heard Joyce behind us.

'You spy—you beastly little spy! Steenie is right.'

I saw the ineffable Shere start, and glance back. She was looking magnificent, of course, leaning low over the stairhead: a snake-woman, fascinating consciously, while she waited to strike again.

Iveagh answered her from a dozen stairs below. 'Well, what of you, going over to the Germans!'

The Wickfords had been trying to persuade Joyce to finish her musical studies at Munich, which her engagement had cut short. I forget if anyone mentions it in the letters. Jack knew the fact, as I did.

'Jove, that's good fighting!' he observed, to me, waking from a momentary trance.

Madeleine, to the Duchess.

[Delivered by Laura. This is really ante-dated, of course, to her previous letter, but for the context is necessary here. It places Jamesie.]

Do you mind awfully if I go to bed? I have got a bit of a headache, the sun or something. Don't come after, I mentioned it to Linda, I shall be all right. If he wants to know where Joyce is, she is sitting on the conservatory step, smoking—Miss Adler is there. If he wants to know where his little boy is, I saw him in the garden, and told him to be quick and go in, because it was beginning to rain. He said he had a message to somebody in the garden, from somebody in the house. Your brother, who was with me, examined him: but whatever it was, he did not let out. I did not think somehow his father would have sent him, or you: so thought I had better mention it. Goodnight.

MADELEINE P.

[The next two of the series are love-letters, men's. The first is nicely written; the second very badly indeed, in pencil, neither paragraphed nor punctuated, flung off full tilt.]

MY SWEET HEART.

I could not come, you must excuse and believe me but such is life. Really and truly darling it breaks my heart to disappoint you, on my honour I was on the edge of coming off. There's many a slip as you will discover like it, but this is the worst I have had. Things are happening you see which the gentlemen did not expect, and Mr. H. so put out he has forgotten you may be sure. I am here on duty by his lordship's choice, and I cannot move, and you not to come to me either, it is

not safe. There is *no danger* (underlined) only a squeak that might occur and no allowing it in the circs being a lady. It is just unfortunate (erased) blasted luck. I hope our Score pleased you it was for your sake these ladies are nothing to me, Mr. Jamesie will bring you this, but do not keep him, he is wanted upstairs. I love you and I will never fail you after this one time so help me God.

F. B.

I cannot come darling, nor have you waiting longer. Go back where you came from and let Tim take you along the lane. I want you here God knows but do not come into it, nor through to the children without me, it is not safe. It is a soul in torment he has presented me, and she flirting powerfully, and the rest of us managing to keep her thoughts engaged. She would be embracing me at a word, and who am I to allow her, with you waiting in the rain perhaps, girl, life of me, as if I cared for them! I sat with Jane lately in the room that used to be Mother's in its ugly days, and from where I sat I could look at the Avenue trees. It was rough on her as I supposed, but she did not cry, anyhow while I had her, and Mother has tricks would do for the proudest, as you know. Wanting me, before now, do you not? Now put your hood on the way I would have shown you, and dont let Tim touch you, a finger of you, or I will slay the rest of him as I did not last night. I do not deserve you but no man does better. Believing that firmly helps me to bear it. Till I see you.

I. S.

[Of the above it may be noted that Janet was Bess's friend: and that she barely knew Joyce. Thus, Suir told her what he believed would interest her, more particularly.]

Pelham to Francis. Written two days later.

Now you are gone, Blakie, I will tell you something. I thought better not, so long as you and he were in the house together, and also, I own, I was in such an absolute rage. It was not only the insult to a decent household, under proper management, which I have not divulged, least of all to Green, who would have felt it more than I did. There was also Tim's cockiness, needing constant sitting on by the lot of us, and beyond bounds when his lordship had trusted him to go to the gate. Altogether my temper was hardly in my holding, but this was the worst.

Take it easy, won't you. He asked Sophie, in my hearing, where she was going to sleep that night. He did not know I was in hearing, having come on her in the shrubbery, but I was taking a stroll to cool my cockles, owing to Tim. I had not thought to have them raised again, and in such a manner.

I believe even at my age I would have been at him, for the girl is young, and there she was, with no one to speak for her, but bless you, she is French. *They* need no one to speak for them, though Sophie is a thought slower than the last we had. The Hon. C. had made a little mistake you see, knowing the race she came of. He had not reckoned for *all* races having their decent individuals, as I could answer. The French are the French, and I do not pretend to know them widely. Eight times I have been with his Grace to the Continental Paris, only eight times. But to put the figure at its lowest, Sophie in herself is an exception, and being engaged to you, anyone should have known it. The girl has a head, too, she did not cry. I stopped to hear it

out naturally, and in the circs you will excuse me. I knew you were tied to the gunroom, and so did he. So did he, my boy. She *let him have it*. Not in French either. Snatching about, as it were, she got the words. They were rather surprising words, but they did *his* business. Not half. When he had gone I waited a bit and then went to her, and there she was, calm and queenly, sitting on a seat. Dressed in decent black as she always is. Not panting even. And she had not spoken loud. I just said—‘My dear, that’s all right. You can bet on us backing you.’ Some stuff of that sort. And I advised her to go in.

Nurse, to Iveagh, Delivered by Pelham.

MY LORD,

Jamesie is in, heated and wringing of course, but no harm done, and is wishful I should explain. I said it was better he should write a line to you, since it is the way of true ease to unburden, and her Ladyship not here. This I send by Pelham, but I should like to add the affairs of the servants do not, as a rule, come to the children’s ears. I am far from liking it, but Sophie is French. Knowing the French as you are said to do I need not enlarge. The child is filled with admiration of the cricketing-score, as children will be, which is how I suppose he crossed with Mrs. Monk.

Yours respectfully,

C. T. JOHNSTONE (Nurse).

[Iveagh chucked me this with a whistle, notes Herbert, but Jamesie’s he concealed. I only got it out of him, years after, by resorting to the most ignoble devices. I own I began to believe he had lost this necessary scrap of my evidence, but Lord, no! He is exactly like a magpie.]

Jamesie, to Iveagh.

NURSERY 11.20.

TO FATHER.

I was not lost in the garden. It was only I had a mesage, French, rather difacult, I had to get done. So that made another mesage, because she wanted it. So that made *another* mesage (3) when I found him at last. And I had to go round a Funy way because of Linda catching me, and so that was all right. So you see it was nothing but business rather a particular Sort. It was only 11.8 by the clock when I came past the last time. I have put it all in my Prayers, for safety, but O isn't he a wonderful man !!!

[The following opinion of Tim's, writes Herbert, has puzzled me a good deal as to its proper placing in the chronicle. It is evidently what the country has been waiting for, but I do not mean that. It is not the least concerned with Joyce, and barely with Bess, and only the cricket episodically. Yet more perfectly than anything, even a contribution I prepared by the pond, which was extraordinarily beautiful, it lends the romantic atmosphere. How did Tim do it, with such material? Holmer park is really not much to look at, and it was a particularly dirty night. If I could but get hold of the 'notes' of Katie's referred to, they might help.]

Tim Geoghan to Pelham.

I dare not for my souls sake tho it is thirsty sorely come to the house, but you might send me a drop of it down here by the boy.

I have seen strange things abroad this night, and me walking simply to the lodge-gate and back by the avenue way. I am not to say what I saw at the end of

it where the trees lean over, but going down it was the Duke. It is not me at this date can be mistaken in him tho he was covered closely. I did not adress him tho I had my thoughts. He would be low these days with his London perplexities and the trouble he has beyond there and Katie writing her notes to him as indeed she has to all of us and Gerry her brother outside himself with the Dublin Propagand and him a loony since his third year when the cart went over him and the small score he made.* Coming back I saw him again and as misbegoten was he saw me. And there I was into it away from the Poney. I get sick of that Poney from the pair of them. Do I not know him I ast the Duke and the expression of his features quite different since last night.† Send some cake also if she is cuting it. I will drink Blakie's health and he mine being separated, that was the Grand Stand we made.

T. GEOGHAN.

Francis's evidence, collected by me, first-hand. S. H.

'Oh yes, she came, sir: that is, she looked in on us; not, you would say, with a fixed purpose, only seeking suggestions, as it were.'

'There was plenty in Wickford's gunroom,' I said.

'There were a good few guns, sir,—and tackle for them too. A beautiful collection the duke has, with what he has given his brother added for his games out there.'

'For his game,' I corrected, severely.

'Yes, sir,' said Francis. 'That's the large game. Between them, you would say they could sweep creation clean of game if they wanted to.'

* The duke's small score.

† The poney's features.

‘Don’t sneer, Francis. It’s not so easy.’

‘I never tried shooting,’ said Francis, rather wistful. ‘And anyhow,’ he resumed, ‘that night it wasn’t my job. The opposite was my job. So I darkened in the billiard-room to be on the safe side. I thought since it led through to the smaller room, and his lordship had left me to judge, that was my department.’

‘To be sure,’ I encouraged. ‘And Mrs. Monk made no objection.’ Francis went on.

‘So we both saw Miss Joyce’s face appear, by way of the passage, which was faint-lighted. And her sister chose to be quiet, and I was naturally.’

‘No doubt,’ I suggested, ‘you had been so thorough-out.’

‘Pretty well,’ said Francis. ‘Except once, when Mrs. Monk wished to meddle with the guns. I mentioned that was against orders.’

‘Yours?’ I enquired. Francis went on.

“Who’s there?” said Miss Joyce, seeing the glitter, very likely, on the diamonds her sister was wearing. “Who do you suppose?” said Mrs. Monk. For they were sitting out that night all over the place, sir. In the bootroom I saw them *and* the bathroom. Why not the billiard-room too?”

‘Why indeed?’ I said. Then I followed all his meaning. ‘Oh, I see. Joyce thought it was Crawford, with Linda.’

‘Who else should she think it was,’ said Francis, ‘and her sister using that tone. It was my idea Mrs. Monk did it expressly to bait her.’

‘Shame!’ I said. Francis was silent. ‘Lucky it wasn’t Crawford,’ I suggested, ‘in the circumstances.’ Francis agreed. ‘They slanged one another, I suppose,’ Francis assented, politely. ‘What did you do?’

‘ I interfered, sir, by means of a finger. I cocked the light up on them sudden, a sudden glare. Strong electricity is very dis-concerting.’ (Dis-concerting, Francis pronounces it, but he uses it right.)

‘ Wasn’t your presence a trifle disconcerting too ?’

‘ Well, she looked odd, sir. She looked very queer. She could not at once get the rights of it, knowing no doubt her sister’s ways. She says to me very haughty after a moment—‘ You can go.’ Exceedingly well she did it. And I mentioned his lordship had asked me to wait for him there, while he just took a look round at the stable. I said him, rather than you, to be more—influential. And she lost all that bright colour, sir, it was striking. She felt bad for the minute, knew she had been done. And I think’—he hesitated for a form of words—‘ she saw herself, sir. Not very nice for her, that was not. Next instant she recovered, and went stepping out.’

‘ To have at Suir on the staircase,’ I said contented. ‘ Thank you, Francis. That is, I think, sufficient. Were you alone when Jamesie came ? I mean, really alone ?’

Francis assented. ‘ I was allowing myself a little smoke,’ he said, modestly. ‘ Not nice to see, things like that between sisters.’

‘ Had you forgotten Sophie ?’ No reply from Francis. I gazed at him a minute, reconstructing the scene. I always enjoy looking at him anyhow. ‘ Could you have managed her ?’ I posed him suddenly. ‘ A madwoman, with a loaded gun ?’ I put it strongly.

‘ Oh yes, sir,’ said Francis. ‘ If you mean physically.’

‘ Well, I’ll tell you something,’ I returned. ‘ You were about the only one of us that night who could.’

'It comes of regular exercise, sir,' said Francis indulgently. He is always considerate of my defects. He turned over our team, visibly, for a moment. Then he said—'Mr. Crawford could have managed her equally,—if he had had time.'

Miss Kitchin, faultlessly typed on the Duke's machine, to her bosom friend 'Dodo' in London.

I write, dearest, in unusual peace, both actual and inward. Duty done, both to the Duke and otherwise, including, Dodo, my duty to *myself*. This is the festival, long looked for (etc.) It has been a little wearing in the event. . . . He looked in lately, seeking somebody, perhaps a partner, possibly the Duke. I smiled, pausing an instant, ready to satisfy. I thought he would leave again, but no! Can you conceive a more trying test at the end of a tiring day? He had changed from his white, and was in full accoutrements. I excused him for wanting to be looked at—such a boy! He came in, putting his gloves on. He spoke to me, as he has not done directly since our conversation on the condition of Ireland. Well, a new trouble appeared at once, for I could not give him what he asked for. I could not speak rashly about what I did not know. One may speculate, but that is not business. There is one's duty to one's principals to be considered. The new Irish reports he asked about I have not set eyes on, actually; for Lord Iveagh, who brought them over, used to be his brother's secretary, and turned me out rather summarily when they were discussed. So I pleaded ignorance, to Steenie. I said, really I did not know.

'You're lying,' he said. 'All women lie.' He looked

pink, and a little savage, and—split the button off his glove !

‘All women use needles,’ I said with a smile. I produced my work-things, and held out my hand. I am foolish, I cannot write of it. He came quite close while I mended his button, and sat, as I felt, looking me over. Closely, too.

‘Have they told Janet?’ he said. He meant his sister, the Duchess.

‘Told her what?’ I said, giving the glove back. I looked him in the eyes, I was able to. He has those clear blue Scotch eyes, candid—oh, so young. After a minute he dropped them, dangling his glove.

‘Getting my buttons sewn on,’ he said. ‘I’m as poor as a rat now. That fellow’s done me. He’s worked it—wants my shoes. I suppose you have heard.’

‘You mean,’ I said, electrified, ‘you are not going back to Ireland?’

He looked at me a minute longer, then he laughed. ‘Well, I’m dashed,’ he said. ‘Wickford doesn’t tell you much.’

After that he heaved himself up—he is long in the limb, Mr. Steenie—and went, leaving me in deep reflection. He asked me as an afterthought if I had seen Mrs. Monk. I had *heard* Mrs. Monk, using terms to her sister in the billiard-room,—however, I did not give my sex away. She is one of us. Her sister, Miss Pennant, is another, and does more, I believe, for the Cause. I have heard Joyce is a fine speaker. I should not have minded a word with her—but I could not catch her to-night.

(Later.) Peace has sunk on the house, at least my quarter of it—giddiness reigns elsewhere. It is true,

the Duke does not tell me much. Nobody does. Why is it? The Duke's relation with me is official purely, not stiff exactly, I do not mean that. He is rather an agreeable person. His brother, who is far more arrogant, overlooks or looks round me. Yet his manners to women—other women—verge on the indecorous, as I have seen to-day. The cricket-game to-day was a study in what, for want of a better word, one may call the lax. They do not regard me as a woman, Dodo. Why? Have I lost all human semblance? But this was worse, because, as Steenie noted, what they kept from me was business. Not quite *my* business, it is true. I am not by the terms of my agreement supposed to touch the Irish correspondence: the whole of the office work of that is done 'beyond,' as his Grace invariably says: done across the water—Home Rule. Or was, while the late agent was alive. The duke has taken it more seriously lately: he is inclined to meddle all round more than he did. But about Ireland he is anxious, I happen to know from allusions of hers. From nothing else: I have not seen a paper this last time, though there are stacks in the house, and I heard plenty of gossip when Steenie came across before. Are they losing trust in me? Do you think he could have thoughts of changing? I wish I did not worry so easily, but Lord Iveagh, anybody, might have given him the idea. Seven years, I have been with him—it was the year of his marriage. I am ageing, of course, but only for a woman. I am not so very much older than the Duke.

(Later.) I have had two visits, unexpected. The Duchess first appeared, and asked me if I would not join the party in the hall. The hall—not the servants', she meant the dancing. Of course I refused, though

thanking her. She has a look of him. She was wearing a picture-gown. She is one of ours, as well, though not very deeply interested—still, I do respect her. She was looking very tired too. She said before leaving I really must not work so late. Consequently, my own, I must shut up this, because it is not working. And I did not confess to her I was writing to my own dear girl. One so seldom has a little peace like this—the waste to spend it in worrying !

And then—then—Nurse came, with that sweet Lamb on her arm, just nodding with sleep, to say goodnight to me. Much too sleepy-bye to play, though of course I gibbered a little. I am silly about them, and Nurse, though grim in appearance, knows. She is really an excellent soul, though so Scotch.

‘And show Miss Kitchin what you have got for her,’ says Nurse.

‘Horse,’ says the Blessed, with a seraphic beam. ‘Ailie d’law.’

‘Rubbish,’ said Nurse, grabbing it. ‘Father drew them, and not over-good at that. What have we got here on the plate, tell her, Aileen.’

They had brought me a slice of the Duchess’s birthday cake. A great slice. Oh yes, they are kind people.

*Nurse, to her sister in the hospital, next day,
relating.*

. . . So Aileen and I took the poor thing her cake. She needs, I thought, something doing for her, and the Duchess, I dare say, had the same idea. Seven years she has been here, that’s as long as myself, I came that year for Kells, and yet hooks on to nothing. It is a pity,

for then they take to sentimentals, you may be sure. It is a woman she is chiefly sentimental with, a woman she has half-married, you know the style. Jokes about old maids as such I do not care for, as I told Pelham. Besides, married you need not be happy, look at that Mrs. Monk. There's a real beauty, half the men running after her, and happy? You tell me! And I am unmarried, and you, come to that, and look at us. . . . Not much hooking-on needed in my case. It is all I can do to keep my floor to myself. I will not have it, I told the Duchess. There is many a house I know where flooding the nursery betimes has been the beginning of the end. I am responsible for these children, I pointed out to her. Her own coming I do not mind. I let her have Kells when she wants him, and at once, just telling him to wash his hands. That's a strong rule of mine with the eldest born. And the Duke I do not mind, though he picks out Aileen. He picked her out for exhibition to-night. I have had to be the kinder to Kells in consequence. Lord Iveagh as a rule waits to be asked. I send him one of the children generally. And anyhow he is so seldom here, or anywhere in the Christian world, that it is exceptional. Miss Kitchin I ask to tea on a Sunday occasionally, partly for the good of the boys. For to teach a boy politeness to women as such, you would not pick out a pretty kind like Sophie. They mind their manners with me, but again, that is different. And even so, between ourselves, I have work with Kells. He is at the naughty age, got it badly. (She goes on for at least a page about Kells, who was her problem.)

The worst of it is, she* is sentimental about everything, about titles and the military too. She

* Miss Kitchin.

gave us a coloured picture,—‘Forward the Light Brigade,’ which I have never put up. I do not care for such things before the children’s eyes, and besides, there is a horse rolling over that would have done for Aileen. Their grandfather in uniform is on the nursery wall. I understand he was a good officer. Yet I daresay that is a weakness on my own part, since it was printed in Edinburgh, and Kirkcudbright is in his titles beneath. Kells is said to be like him and his mother too, but I can’t see it. He is that side clear enough, and he will be tall with his long feet. But I should be happier if he did not first disobey, as to-night, and then be afraid of the consequences. Afraid is the word. My worst fear now is that he should get to hanging too much about his uncle Crawford. (More about Kells, and Steenie, Nurse was full of it.) However, sufficient to the day. So long as he and Lord Iveagh do not get across one another, and fatally. I told Kells’ father last night his vanity would never survive a whipping, once for all I said it, for it is a thing I have at heart. I wish to guard against contingencies, for Kells is naughtier at once when his uncle comes. He has that little gleam in his eyes, cunning, that I hate to see. (More about Kells.) Never, I assured the Duke, by all my experience, whip a conceited child. It is worse than cruelty, it is *useless*. That should appeal to Lord Iveagh at least.

My saying this conversation occurred last night will show you. Being so completely out of things, here in my own department, I had no less than three visits from his Grace. How is that?—though two were short ones. At least he apologised for keeping the children so late, all very well, but he does not have them cross to-morrow. There will be snarling, well I know. . . . Well, and the

second time, who do you suppose came with him? Now I let you guess. Anyone else I should have been prepared for better, his Grace's mother even, for she comes at times. It took me quite aback. I got up, dropping down all my stockings, which his Grace picked up. 'We are breaking every law of the land,' he says to me in his humorous style. 'She is here on sufferance, under my seal. Just show her the kids and content her. Ten minutes. Ten minutes by my watch, Bess.' He showed it her, and he went.

She took her cloak off when he had gone, being wettish. I saw the case very easily. My eyes, in this world, are not absolutely closed. And I have had the special chance of seeing Mr. Crawford's manners with Jamesie. He dislikes that child.

'I never answered your letter, Nurse,' she said. Well—you remember? It put me out, to remember how I had written it, having seen what I have seen in the household since. I just said some common thing and went on darning. She is a simple lady, and never heeds that. She makes Jamesie's clothes to the last button, and though on the verge of the artistic, they are properly made. I just paused long enough to spread the cloak out to dry it: I had a bit of a fire, Jamesie having been wet equally. His bits of things were still hanging there, over the high guard.* You may be sure she saw them.

'I'm disobeying,' she said, half-laughing, and kneeling by the guard she bent her head down on her hands, her elbows on the cloak. Oh, talk to me of Mrs Monk! And—'How is he?' she said.

Well, I should naturally have thought she meant the child. Wouldn't I? You might as well ask, do I know

* Defence against fire, peculiar to nurseries.

married people. I have had enough of them. That is the love of a life-time, though both are very secret. Why, apart from all else, you give me a child at close quarters, as I have had Jamesie time and again when his parents have been travelling, and I will answer to you for the terms the parents are on. I promise to.

So I said what I could, though he had not been up all day as it happened. He has had enough to do, between ourselves, in his brother's household, what with the party, and the poney, and this Irish do on top which is bothering both of them, it was hardly likely we should look upon him.

However, I gave her what I could.

But—'What does he look like?' she pressed me, her brows lifted, laughing at herself. So I said soberly he looked as usual. It is true he has had these fevers before now. But there—no avoiding insincerity with such subjects! 'Has he been out in the rain?' she says.

She touched Jamesie's knickers as she said it, but still she did not mean him. So there I was again, for Tim said his lordship had been twice to the stable, and an eye upon it all the evening. That is how my lord Kells was caught out. So I was just giving her a formal answer, roundabout as it were, when there was a sound behind us. I might have guessed it! It is one of the miracles of this world, I say it in all reverence, a mother's voice. And yet she had been talking so quietly, of intention, not to wake them. However, there we were. The child was on her, speechless.

I was going to leave her, making an excuse to go to Aileen, but she would not have it. She told me across him that she had no time. It was not easy for her to move, and that strong child's arms all about her, but

she said in his ear, through his hair which was anyhow out of bed—‘I have got to *escape*.’ Making a secret of it, she knows them. And sure enough, he half let her go at once. You should have seen his face, glorious, while she explained, and even showed him a letter. Her husband’s last letter, with directions. Oh, she knows!

‘Mother, how awful—O how *awful*, Mother,’—that was Jamesie. And he wrapped her cloak all about her, half earnest, half playing at it, even her face! You know the only child. Getting on a chair to finish it, the picture they made, and her fine shape. If I have a hard and fast rule in this life, it is to make no difference for personal appearance, but there are times when Jamesie does me. It is all I can do not to look at him, to the disadvantage of Kells.

The duke fetched her, on time as he said, looking worried. ‘Come along,’ he said, rather curt. I gathered somehow or other, Lord Iveagh had been in the right of it, forbidding her. He did not want her complicating. . . .

[This superb witness, notes Herbert, was as exact as you would expect of her origins. Like Nelson or George Washington, she could not lie. ‘Complicating’ was exactly what Bess did: precisely. She might have done worse, it is true, had she stayed longer. She stayed a quarter of an hour, by Francis’s watch, and passed twice through the back premises of the house. We did not, however, entertain her unaware, not quite unaware to Steenie. Steenie, who had done nothing at all, all the evening, while we had been plotting and pettifogging, feverishly, shifted. Everybody saw the alteration occur, for he is not a type that changes much. Besides, he had been so saintly.

He discovered she had been in the house, heaven

knows how, or the devil possibly, and he attacked Francis. This again I can offer first hand.

'Seen a woman come past here?' said Steenie. Francis said he had seen several. 'A woman in a blue cloak.' Francis allowed he had noted one cross the corner of the billiard-room passage. I gather he was a little bored, watching round about the gun-room, by the way he admitted, on duty, Steenie's curiosity. Linda had done her best for him, but he was bored.

'Who was with her?' said Steenie. Francis said it looked like the Duke. But the gent—gentleman, I beg his pardon—had a wrap on, because he had been taking the air, in the park.

'You're lying,' said Steenie, as usual. 'It was the other one. You don't take me in.'

Francis took it easy. He told me Mr. Crawford did not like him, since the cricket. This interested me, because I had not noticed any jealousy in Steenie, at the time. But thinking the scores over, it seems very probable.

Francis told him the party with the lady had spurs. This was true—Wickford had his cavalry uniform: one of his uniforms—I forget how many dukes have by nature. Anyhow, he was wearing it, and wearing it well.

'The other has spurs, you ass,' said Steenie. This was also true, because Suir, assailed by the children, had trumped up, with Pelham's skilled assistance, a kind of gaucho-rig: the kind he wore when the horse spread him on the Pampas, and refrained from kicking him afterwards. Suir had had to stand a good many allusions to that equine act of charity during the evening—even from Kells.

This was all Francis told me of the interview and its subject. Except that he saw the lady in the cloak come past again, certainly in the Duke's escort, fifteen minutes afterwards, and that he did not inform Mr Crawford. Consequently, friend Stephen continued looking for the angel, which was a pity for Joyce.]

DEAR SUIR,

Joyce did come to the pond, but I hardly think by her demeanour she would have done it. For one thing, she is a capital swimmer, as good as Linda. For another, she had a very nice frock on, which would have been spoiled. Further, she was, when she noticed and spoke to me, comparatively sane. She is an excellent actress, anyhow; but that you would know from her music. She strolled twice round, smoking, before she saw me sitting in my poet's corner, beside a blasted birch-tree, dreaming on the smudgy skies. (I cannot call them starry.) When she marked me she laughed, loud but not inordinately, and said what fools we all were. That was natural. I thought I would treat her straight, being in the void as to the proper treatment. I said, owing to her games, I had had a beastly evening, and you had had worse. She seemed quite interested, and far from displeased, by the picture. She said she thought she had given you rather a time of it, but she did not seem perfectly sure. I thanked my stars, and your special genius, because she longed to be sure. She simply longed to. I said, did she know she had kept you from Bess, and she laughed louder than ever. I rose and shut off the conversation, for fear, blank fear, of the more she intended to say.

They know too much and too little, those girls. It is, for the kind of fool I am, a soul-shrinking combination. I know if I had the pluck to master, and to marry her, she would make me quite a decent wife: and a pretty, and a capable, and I should like to make up to her too. But I can't, I can't really. She must join the majority.

[' Who ever asked you ?' was Iveagh's answer to this, not unnatural, when he next came across me, which was in some rather public place, say a Promenade Concert, or the Piccadilly entrance to the Tube. I had by that time, of course, regretted my outburst profoundly. But he never let me forget it—nor did Wickford. Bother (as Steenie was given to ejaculating) those Suirs !]

M. du Frettay,—into the middle of all this.

Why the four thousand devils do you not *write* ?

The same, peacefully, some weeks later.

So that was all. Ah well, mon cher, let me inform you, your sister-in-law wastes her pains. You say Miss Joyce is musician. Good. And she goes to Germany. Good. She falls into the arms of the very sisterhood best fitted to undo your work. Why, my poor friend, that is the very place for her ! She will be cherished there, her disease also, since they cultivate it for the so-called glory of their men. Down, then, with their men's so-called glory ? Perfectly, very good, I range myself beside you ; but note, that by destroying that high-coloured and whooping hysteria, you will destroy the essential elements of their art as well. And no inconvenience in that, you tell me ? [He goes on for several pages answering remarks his correspondent could never have made. Then—] It is truly unfortunate that while I was with you I did not happen to meet her. So many interesting types I noted in the corners of your London, but I was too soon for that. In the arms of the immaculate policeman it has

lately perfected itself, and I absent,—I absent, Iveagh ! And twenty-four, such that she would then have been seventeen. Seventeen, unspoiled, pretty, say you ? . . . Eh bien, when are you coming across ?

Suir, to Trix Adler. Delivered by Pelham, after his departure the following day.

I wanted to mention I was aware how you backed me last night, though saying nothing. You were with us, not against, and that was much. A woman against last night, with the state she was, and Linda, more shame to her, spurring her, might just have spoiled the play. You have that same thing beyond,* but it is better managed. Anyhow there the men go round. You will excuse this, and me cutting your three dances. Next time, and granted my mother not looking, I will make it up.

The Dowager, to Lady Iveagh.

MY DEAR ELIZABETH,

Our party is thinning now, and I have a moment. I have been fully engaged helping Janet with her household, as you will have guessed. I may say you were missed, last night: Janet's brother, Herbert, and the Adler girl, all asked after you at different junctures, wishing you were there. I am bringing James back with me to-morrow, since Iveagh did not seem to want him. At present he is engaged in writing a French letter opposite me very busily. He has the big dictionary and has not once applied for a word. He is

* America.

almost too independent. I will look at the letter before it goes.

He and Kells were both rather troublesome last night, overdone with all the excitement probably. However, Wickford's treatment of them showed anything but favouritism: indeed the favour was mostly in James' direction. No doubt he expected James' father to step in, but Iveagh had too many other interests, as was evident. Consequently Kells nearly broke his heart in solitude, and is poorly to-day, and James is particularly confident and contented-looking. Do you not think you had better cut his hair? He grows such a big boy, and is not really an effeminate type. His trick of setting the corners of his mouth reminds me often of his grandfather. If you can meet me to-morrow early, say two-fifteen, at Matching and Selbody's, I should be glad of your help with those tiresome curtains. I must get that done.

Yours affectionately,
GERTRUDE W.

Jamesie to Denise.

CHÈRE DENISE,

C'était le plus grand succès! Et ce finissait avec le succès plus grand que tous, qui est Secret. Kells n'est pas bien aujourd' hui. Ou bien c'est le soleil ou bien le thé, mais nous pensons le dernier. La maladie est une chose terrible. J'ai vu Sophie et Francis dans le parc, vous raplez? Le Français-anglais Mariage. Il faisait un Siècle hier, et Madcap aussi. 156 pas sortez,* figurez! Father n'est pas Colère avec moi,

* Not out.

nous avons conversé beaucoup après déjeuner dans la librairie. Il a me donné le gros Dictionnaire, pas à ennuyer Grandmother. Il n'est pas malade à mentionner.* Il dit que je informe à votre oncle qu'il va écrire un de ces jours. Avec notre cher amour et compliment.

JAMESIE.

* 'To mention,' characteristic Suirism.

PART II.—THE TRUCE

PART II.—THE TRUCE

The Duchess, to her eldest brother in the Guards.

Goodbye, old boy, and good luck to you. Kells and I shall see you ride past. Keep an eye on Steenie if it is done, but I do not ask the impossible. I remember how it was at Eton, in the old days. Write when you can, Cardie.

YOUR SISTER J.

Nurse, to her sister in the hospital.

Goodbye, and good luck to you. No chance of the station at that hour, I have my work to do. It won't be such a bad climate, Lord Iveagh says, he showed them in the big atlas this evening, so interested, bless them, in everything concerning me! Somehow it got me by the throat, seeing Aileen. As if that can know what it is, or what you will soon be seeing. Write when you can, Maggy.

YOUR SISTER C.

Sophie, to her brother in the 'génie.'

Au revoir, mon petit, et que le bon Dieu te garde. Aie soin d'écrire régulièrement à ta mère, elle en mourra autrement. Les sapeurs sont tout de même moins exposés,—l'Angleterre est avec nous,—et c'est pour la sainte Patrie.

TA SŒUR S.

The Dowager, to the Canon.

Goodbye for the present, Lionel, and good luck to you. You are doing no more than I expected you to do. We may have doubts of our other allies, but there is no doubt God is with us, since this business of Belgium. Write me to Boulogne when I tell you.

YOUR SISTER G.

St. John Herbert, to the Duke.

Goodbye, Wick, but I shan't waste tears on you: and I must say you are playing Iveagh a low-down trick. Get him something good at the end of it, or I really shall believe you are the ornamental one of the family. I doubt if you will get much riding at this rate, unless it is riding backwards. Still, here's luck to the outcome. Yours ever

S. H.

The Duke, to M. du Fretlay, Capitaine, Pilote et Chef d'Escadrille.

Good luck, Gabriel, you'll be in front of us; and over us, won't you?—and anyhow, at our side. Perhaps the conception is Irish, but you will appreciate the feeling intended. I am playing my brother a trick you won't care for, leaving him in my shoes beyond,* but I think, with a historical effort, you will follow the game. There is simply no one else I could depend on for such a purpose. You'd have laughed the way I went at him, quite lost my dignity, and him looking sidelong and

* Ireland

sickened, you know the style. It is only temporary, till the backwash from the enlisting is over, and the country quieted, so I soothed him; and promised him any commission he likes in earth or heaven at the end. He has taken it on him, taken it off me as usual, and my bits of brothers-in-law despising him for it, but you will not. Give him a letter or two in his loneliness, will you not? You may be sure his thoughts will be with France.

Pelham to Francis.

So long, my boy, and good luck to you. I wish to the Lord I could come along. Losing the duke I am stranded, and yet where is the good of my enlisting? So long, and don't worry about this end. I'll keep an eye on Sophie.

Madeleine's schoolmistress, to Madeleine.

Very well, my dear, your mother is the best judge. If Miss Adler's ambulance has a vacancy, and you are such a practised driver, I do not think a last examination should stand in the way. You are very young, but many girls over age look younger, and you have, as we know on the field, a steady head. Why not you, as much as the boys on the battle-ships? The cricket will miss you next year, and your friends, and I shall miss you too. I should have liked, for the school's sake, to keep you longer: but the Red Cross, the real one, Spenser's, stands first.

CHARLOTTE NAPIER.

Joyce's professor, at Munich, to Joyce.

Auf Wiedersehen, liebes Fräulein, and may the God of our common art have you in his charge. I have arranged I hope that you get to Switzerland without annoyance, fortunately it is not far. Go quickly, take nothing, and lest money lacks, pocket this. May the hour not be far when you can repay me, but for the meeting's sake only, for between *us* nothing is owed or repaid. I charge you with no letters, it is dangerous. If you meet in England—or—, in Paris—or—, grasp their hand for me quietly. I have travelled much, seen much, and am ageing, but not blindly. Music, which is unity, which is universality, lies stricken: but she will awake again.

F. A. REUSS.

St. John Herbert, to the world at large.

To this fine echo of farewells, amid a sea of work, and swirl of feeling did the strife represented by the Cricket Match come to an end. Another strife, as ancient if less inevitable, swept it off the scene. Less inevitable, all we thinkers reflected with shame: not the fighters—Janet's brother Cardew flung his cap to the ceiling when he heard the Germans had crossed the French frontier. Cardew would not have prevented a European War even if he could, and I hereby whisper to the world he could not. He lacked a few of the attributes reckoned essential to a pure diplomacy.

But Cardew, though I shall quote him occasionally, is not one of our actors. Of these, as in the cricket match, let the ladies stand first. The Dowager Duchess

vanished in a fanfaronnade to France, with a small hospital completely equipped. She ordered Janet to come with her: but Janet, having seen the whole of her own family, husband and three brothers, off to the wars, refused point-blank and stuck to her children. Nor would Janet let Miss Kitchin go, she said she wanted her for Belgium. Bess, on the other hand, was inevitably swept in by the high command, though she was kindly allowed to live in London, holding there the post of provisioner to the Duchess's hospital of anything she happened to need for the next nine months: an appallingly laborious, and intensely ungrateful task. I speak with feeling, since I entirely lost Bess's society, which I had counted on of course to console me for Francis. But her Grace the Dowager did not regard me. Bess had a fund at the bank to manage economically, several account-books (which Jamesie ruled for her) and lived under a storm of telegrams. She 'did' for the dowager, as her husband in Ireland 'did' for the duke, and by their doing they were once more separated.

But what was that? Everybody was separated. The customarily large English family broke into fragments, just as the customarily small French family crept close and crystallised. English girls spread fan-like over Europe, in the wake of the men. American girls, passionately curious, with all their sympathy, needing as much as any modern boy to 'live the war,' followed and financed them. Trix, clad in a brown leather jerkin and gaiters chiefly, drove an ambulance-car 'around' Paris in great style: and moved on, as soon as she could, south-eastward. Madeleine, bold and young—bold because young—went behind her. Neither of these two girls, both very pretty, and moneyed as was evident,

received either an insult or an offer of marriage during the period of their ministration. I lay it to manner, see the Cricket Match. Whereas Joyce—I prefer to stick to documents, in the case of Joyce.

I insert here a conversation, noted during those winter months, on an occasion when a certain number of our scattered society were collected and talking commonplaces. We all spoke platitudes and repeated one another, if you remember, the first winter of the war.

WICKFORD. ‘You needn’t be anxious about Joyce, my wife says the war will cure her. She is exactly the kind of case the war will cure.’

BESS. ‘Why should it?’

THE DOWAGER. ‘What did you say, Elizabeth?’

SELF. ‘She said, why should it?’

WICKFORD. ‘Well—er—I suppose my wife meant—cataclysms of the kind entail an—er—volume of distress, world-wide, rather lifts you out of your personal woes.’

CANON OXBOROUGH. ‘Excellent, my boy. Indeed—ah—exactly.’

SELF. ‘Well now, Bess!’

BESS (*blushing*). ‘Janet has a high idea of human nature. I should have thought it simply added to them. I mean, troubles which are of the nature of grievances—permanent injustice—are not so easily made away with. They might of course be swamped for a time, by sympathy or excitement. Is that what Janet meant?’

WICKFORD. ‘Oh, talk to her.’

THE DOWAGER. ‘Well, at least the girl came back from Germany in a chastened frame of mind, and has set to work with a will. One may say with a passion—’

WICKFORD. ‘Don’t, Mother. Leave it at that.’

CANON OXBOROUGH. ‘Eh, Wickford. How so?’

SELF (*Wickford stuck*). 'Leave it at will, Duchess, that's all. Passion lugs us back into the personal again. (*To Wickford*). Your wife thinks Miss Pennant cured, then ?'

WICKFORD (*confidential*). 'Oh well, Linda said she was deep in with a doctor at the Cottage Hospital.'

THE DOWAGER. 'Wickford, I am really astonished you repeat such things—and on such authority. Linda indeed !'

BESS (*earnestly*). 'I hope it's true.'

EVERYBODY. 'Hullo, Bess !'

SELF (*Bess stuck*). 'I think she means it's a more natural way to cure her, don't you, Bess ? I own, to me, Janet's way smacks of sentiment. It seems a trifle—well—cumbrous, to evoke a world-war for the purpose. You see, the next step is to call the cataclysm providential, a crowning mercy—because it might cure people like Joyce.'

CANON OXBOROUGH. 'Ahem. There is a good side, one must not forget, even to such——'

SELF and WICKFORD (*rudely interrupting*.) 'There !'

To proceed to the men, Francis and Tim enlisted simultaneously. Steenie took a commission in his brother's regiment. Shere went in and stayed in, unlike the cricket-match. Self scored a duck, that is to say was rejected with contumely. Wickford fattened rapidly (*Janet told me*) in the nice front seat his fortunes granted him. Iveagh grew thin meanwhile in his western retreat: not so much that he wanted food as that he was out of focus. The fashion of the times failed, for the first ten months, to take him in.

The only people who were decent to him were myself, I flatter myself, and Trixie. Trix expecially was a brick, because female opinion was by no means indifferent to Iveagh. Madame du Frettay let him go,

undiscouraged by Gabriel. Janet, whom he particularly admired, practically deserted him. She understood the case, through her husband's agency, only, from the minute when she had classed him, she left him out. Janet came of an old military stock, and the Great March caught her inevitably, swept her along. She carried Kells with her, because, child as he was, her influence was strongly on him, and her nature was his. She never once wrote to Iveagh, fond though she really was of him, during those nine months. He was thus isolated from his London world, for Bess was barely in it: and Bess, like himself, was working night and day.

Of his work I am not going to speak here, beyond a hint or two as foundation. Such work as he undertook, as a rule, speaks in events, not volumes. The estate was in one of the nondescript counties, politically, and near the coast. His brother was a firmly-convinced loyalist-unionist, and he, of course, represented his brother. He had no choice, often, but to be silent on his own sentiments. He learnt silence—not that he needed to learn it, having lived the solitary life; and yet that supremely sensitive people knew his sympathy perfectly: battering him on every side, I learnt from Byrne, to get it, which is their way. Byrne, a first-class witness on the spot, whom I shall quote later, said he was the more loved for that little gloomy manner of his, which was moreover part of their memories; and that Iveagh, on his side, was the crosser for their cajolery, which I well believe. I pictured him often, raging in inaction, as the accounts of the retreat came in—the ‘racket,’ as he and Wickford always called it: that awful and affecting period when two great forces stooped to conquer; as

France, the land of friendship, du Frettay's France, was steadily engulfed. I wondered, often, that his best friend should understand him so little: that Janet, his wife's best friend, should do so. As for Joyce——But I prefer to stick to documents, in the case of Joyce.

Steenie fell gloriously at Neuve Chapelle. There was no doubt about the glory. See the following:

*The Earl of Kirkcudbright, to the Duchess of
Wickford.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Thank you for your letter, it touched me at this juncture to see one in your hand. It would have pained me, amongst the mass of letters we have received, and are receiving, to have missed my eldest daughter. We have not agreed about Stephen, Janet; there were always elements in the boy women as such could not understand. You worried, and I waited, that was the difference. Now, you see, when the moment came, it needed but his country's call to slough off that youthful skin. The youngest of us, the first to fall, henceforth in front of his brothers. No man of our house need be ashamed of him—personally I am proud and glad. We have a most appreciative letter from his colonel, but are a little surprised to hear nothing from Cardew. The references in the evening papers helped your mother. She is bearing up wonderfully, but of course it has been a shock. . . .

Lady Kirkcudbright, to the same.

Oh Janet, Janet, how could you deceive me about him? In my heart I knew it—never did him justice—saw so little of him these last years—my Steenie, my poor boy. . . .

Sophie, to the same: from Sèvres.

Madame la Duchesse permettra-t-elle que je lui offre ma respectueuse sympathie? I saw in the English paper here about M. Crawford. Ah, the sad, the glorious times! Now for Madame's one it is finished, yet she has others. May she be consoled and fortified in her sisterly suffering. *C'était une belle mort.*

My little one is better. He was projected by the shell, and the nerve shaken, not broken anywhere. He will soon go back. Then I also return and promptly. Fortunately in Madame's immediate situation so interesting, the mourning will be unimportant. May it be a little boy, for Madame, to replace him!

Her most devoted
SOPHIE.

Cardew, to the same.

Hold up, old girl, here we are. One more pull, and we are through with it. It was all right, ripping, could not be better. I send you the details to date, so far as I can get them. It is cleared right out of the path. For heaven's sake write to the Mater, though—I can't, I feel as dead as a fish about it. The fact is they have been so out of it, at home, these last years, that I hardly know where I am. Anyhow my head is going round,

with the dead-stop it is, and the ass one feels with idiots condoling. Women can put it on better, at these peculiar moments. I will see to the business and so on.

Your brother C.

Janet, to her Mother.

Do not come to me, Mother darling. This is your quiet time, and I shall be all right. The fourth, you know, I am following in your footsteps. Only—no, do not let Father wish *that*. Cardie sends these facts, more worthy of credence, he says, than the colonel. Think of that, and the first time, the earliest. It is the only, only way.

Iveagh, to Wickford.

I saw Stephen in the Standard, that was a good end for him. I am sorry for Jane, the letters she will be getting. Will you tell her I am sorry if you see a chance?

Cardew, to Wickford.

. . . and that makes the last. There is nothing else serious, that can come to my father's ears. Some bits of debts during the last days, but that is squared by the news, I know the fellows. There is the Irish girl, but your brother says he is throttling her, good man. She is much the worst of them, eloquent, it used to make the Mater sick getting her letters, so you can guess what it would be now. For the time she has forgotten. . . . It is jolly good of you, Wickford. Of course, after Mother, it was the thing that bothered me

most. They simply do not let me have the funds necessary to cover a thing like this, and the pater goes off so easily. . . . I say, get in a word for me to Lady Iveagh, will you? She seems to be sick with me, the letter I wrote Janet. I never supposed anyone would look at it. I dare say it read wildly—such a weight off the lot of us—such a relief.

[The birth of the Duchess of Wickford's third son was announced, with correct war-time discretion, in the London papers.]

Cardew, to Bess.

DEAR LADY IVEAGH,

I am beastly sorry, on my word I am. I had no idea J. was so near her event. One forgets, you know. I wrote to my mother, on the spot, somehow, better than nothing. Of course we knew J. cared for him, I mean, cared in the sense of working; that is why we gave her the work. Steenie always had, from a kid, rather belonged to her. Now, of course, having the other* makes it worse. I wish I could write better, but I only repeat what you said and spoil it. I never meant she should lie to Mother, I know she couldn't, but she is smart at writing, puts things so well. So do you, my word—but I don't wonder you are sick with me.

Would it be any good telling J. that Steenie really thought a lot of her, because I happen to know he did. I have a note he started, thanking her for something: perhaps better not send it, but you could say. He always made an exception for her when he was down on his luck, feminine luck I mean. And look here, will

* Child.

you give her my love, and Ronald's, and say anyhow we appreciate her? And look here, forgive me yourself?

[I regret, says Herbert, I cannot give Bess's to Cardew which called forth this. Everybody, not only Bess's own belongings, kept her letters so closely. This may be because she wrote little and briefly, even to Jamesie, so that her words were of weight; or it may be other things.]

The Duchess, to the same,—note.

Dear, it is all right, perfectly. He is the utterest darling, though small. Nurse says if I am good I may see you to-morrow. It is good for me, really, the two things coming together, for it forced me to think. He will have been born into thought, not fury, like so many little war-children. It was like you to come and leave everything, when poor Mother was unable to stir. You are the best, Bess, I feel you are sure of things: Jamesie is very fortunate. I am still weak, perplexed about Steenie. It was grand, we were wrong possibly,—probably, weren't we? But, Bess, where he is gone, wherever he is gone to, *will he not begin again?*

Katie Rochester, Castle Wickford, to Lady Kirkcudbright; seized by Suir before transmission.

Your ladyships Honour in her berevment will surly let me come near with mine and tell you of the sweet little child I have which is all he has left behind him. Surly your ladyships Grace will beleve my word it is his and none others tho in this wiked place they make play to misbeleve. But ask Ld. Iveagh if it is true, and

me with a note from himself* admitting truth and unwilling to person me tho the Times so hard. It is not your Nobility in her distress will fail to grant my rights or preserve what is left of him by a proper allowance this being a man-child. Is the country and the Defense not needin them? Will he not be a Soldier-boy as his Da was the darling if he does not die on me as doctor nos is possible his Ldship keeping me so low. For the Holy Mother's sake you that was mother to him in infancy. . . (*And so on.*)

Joyce, to the same.

How sweet of you to write! No one else has thought of me, nobody, but it is so like his own mother not to forget. I was longing to talk to you, and yet telling myself that Janet would do it better, and then your dear letter came!

Oh yes, it was a shock, a thrill extraordinary. I am managing to do my work as usual, because it is the only way, the only possible way. So many are having their secret possessions shorn away like this. We are no exception. I do not suffer as you do from stupid uncomprehending letters, because fortunately so few knew what there was between us. So I can go on undisturbed, steadily. And *proud*. I keep a vision of his face as it was that morning, and I keep the scrawl of his last words to me.† Of course write, dear Lady Kircudbright, if it is of any comfort to you. I wish I could come to you, but work——!

Your daughter for the moment

JOYCE.

* Stephen.

† This document I have not even looked for. S. H.

Madeleine, to Linda Monk.

Joyce may be writing to everybody, but she has kept off me. Consequently, I shouldn't mind knowing how she is taking it. I think some of you might write something better than a postcard at times. I do not suppose it is jolly for Joyce, all things considered, any more than for the Duchess—I managed to write a line to her. I thought Laura or somebody said Steenie had been knocked out by that doctor in the hospital J. was so keen on, or was that my mistake? I am sure, you see, to put my foot in it with Joyce unless you keep me up to date, she is never at the same thing for a week together since she got back from Germany. One man one work, is what I should suggest for Joyce. . . . Linda, I say, do stop her about the mourning, I can't stand that. If she expects me to, I am not on, even to a band on my uniform, thanks. I call that swank, and rather a nasty sort. She ought anyhow to ask leave of the family.

[Joyce's to Madeleine is missing]

Madeleine, to Joyce.

Hold on! I can stand a good deal, but your last was not nice to read. Linda most likely misrepresented what I said, however for safety I beg your pardon. About the mourning I take back nothing, really I cannot swallow it; but when I said 'one man one work,' I meant one work (war-work) for every man (or woman), exactly in the sense of 'one man one vote.' Now is that clear? I did not mean one man at a time, and one work at a time, which is how you seem to have chosen to take it. I should not have said that to you, because there are

some things I do not say. Not that you will ever believe it. Do be decent, Joyce. Don't you drop me, because I want somebody. Use your imagination—can't you see what it is, at the end of a hardish day, in a foreign country, to open a letter from England and find *that*?

M.

[Iveagh's to Joyce is missing]

Joyce to Iveagh.

Thanks for your interest. How are you feeling now in your royal retirement. You live in a Castle, don't you? I always understood those ancient keeps were especially hard to attack. No room even for a wandering arrow through the little windows, on to the breakfast table, for instance. Shere's best friend was blown to fragments last week, while he was drinking a cup of coffee, under his eyes. Pleasant, wouldn't it be, to see your school-friend dispersed so unexpectedly. Still, I dare say you would take it calmly. Jack seems to have had a bit of a jar. . . . You do seem to be busy, to judge by your wife's anxiety. Don't you break down, or whatever will the country do? And just keep that beastly girl from writing her beastly letters to Stephen's poor mother, will you? I should have thought you would have had the sense to think of that without me, however I offer you a hint. In case you have missed Stephen's colonel's report, I send you the cutting,—his father had it printed. They are putting a marble up in the church to him, and allowing me to contribute, privately. Publicly, of course, it would be too trying to take part. . . .

Iveagh to Joyce.

I just wanted to set you right about the castle. It was built about 1840, and is plastered particularly in the style. It would fall a little easier than Antwerp. It is large and to spare, the windows are big enough for rocks to come through, or rotten eggs, or anything. I am sorry I wrote at all, if it offended you. It might have been better not. If you will excuse me you are lying about Katie, I should say misinformed. Any letters from her Stephen's mother refers to are old ones, dating before I came on the scene. It is not that I trust the girl, anything but, it is simpler. I have the post-mistress under my thumb. That can be managed this side; and Katie, owing to a young child, cannot easily get beyond my watching, or our post. You can be easy as to that matter, really. . . .

Joyce, to Iveagh.

How dare you mention a child to me? How exactly like you. Whose child is it? I hate you.

J.

Iveagh, to Wickford.

I cannot do that girl Joyce, I am bound to mismanage it. I dare say I should not have started, considering what is past. It is very odd of Lady K. to take her up, especially in Janet's present situation, but I have long given up understanding them.* Bess and Janet are the only two I understand. . . . I am glad Jane is better now, don't mention it. My claim on my wife at present

* Mothers.

is nil, and Mother's you settled nicely. I am sincerely obliged for that. Why does Mother not get a proper manager, with the money she has? There are lots of women out of work, if I understand Trix Adler. Not but what my own is out of work, myself having the boy here, only Mother does not pay her for what she does. And besides I would not let her take it if Mother did—so now you know all my feelings.

Jim is a good boy, and does his lessons and jobs for me, and when I cannot see to him I let him read at large. I do not know how many of Father's books are really applicable to the situation, I have an idea the girl might object to some of them, but what are you to do? They are good books, if the history they contain is not true completely; and it is not more godless than the history we are constructing now. . . .

[Joyce's to Francis is missing: Linda had apparently commissioned her to write with a consignment, in the first instance.]

Francis to Joyce.

MISS JOYCE,

I have not forgotten you Miss and thank you for your letter, as also Mrs. Monk for what she has sent. The cake was excellent, and large enough for a battalion, indeed most of ours enjoyed it. Only perhaps I might say to you Miss what I would not to her, not wishing to appear ungrateful, that a young lady is already looking after me. It is only knowing many to be worse off, for Lady Iveagh remembers me also, I venture this, since equal all round is what we strive for, I own very hard to get. I am told by one who should know that the French army is cared for less than ours is, and fond of

eating decidedly, so there would be no waste nor failure to appreciate cakes like that. And some people think the exchange nice between the countries, as giving things a lift in a situation a bit tricky like this occupation of ours. This last is my own view solely, may be quite off, but taken as I may say *first hand*. It seems a pity since we are here so-called to help the French, and fighting in the style they do, they should take against us, what do you say Miss? Clever as you are at persuasion,* perhaps you can make your sister and others as liberal see it, it might do good.

Yes, I saw about Lieutenant Crawford, a very game end as good as any sportsman could desire. I have not forgotten his playing that day what anyone could see was the smart University style. And good playing should make fair fighting is what we are accustomed to believe. Still it takes two to make a fair fight. The less said of that the better after this Gas. Mr. Jamesie writes me too from Ireland, and killing it is, I can tell you here his letters go round. Mr. Herbert I know considers him out of the way. His lordship I naturally can't speak of knowing little of him but through Mr. James.

Herbert, to Francis, returning the above letter to its author.

I should cut out the last sentence. No need, I mean, to discuss every point Miss Pennant brings up. Otherwise it is first-class, and could offend nobody. Thanks for the confidence.

S. H.

[Joyce's to Shere is missing]

* Platform—F. had heard her.

Shere, to Linda.

MY DEAR GIRL,

Much obliged for yours, sorry I had no time to answer immediately. We have had a bit of a scuffle here these last two days. I can tell you the pâté was appreciated, a very kind thought. I have been tossing up about Joyce, but have decided not to answer her. She is a trifle excited, isn't she? And it's a rottenly delicate situation. Silence is best.

Look here, why the devil does she drag Suir in? That is what bores me partly. I can't get a way on, somehow, writing about a thing like that. What has he got to do with her, anyhow? Was there really something between them? I remember tossing up, that night at Holmer, and deciding against, with Herbert's assistance. My idea was, she was simply paying him out for Crawford—if you can't kick the driver kick the next horse, that sort of idea. Only there seems less point, somehow, in kicking him now. However, this may just prove my ignorance of the sweet lot of you, mayn't it? Perhaps I will have a shot, when I have rested a bit, at answering Joyce. [*Shere did not.*]

As to that night at Holmer, it may seem odd to you, but I cannot forget it. It comes clearer. It may be because I felt a fool. I wouldn't go as far as your word 'indecent,' Linda, that's the kind of thing that only sisters say. But I know I funk'd, before the end: I wanted to get behind a door, and so did Herbert. And you, if I remember, got behind one, anyhow I couldn't find you when I looked for you. Well, I have something of the nature of gratitude left to Suir, because he tackled it. He went at it straight, I can't say more.

I can't get what I want to stated, the fact is I feel rather rocky, writing on the subject, even to you. If he turned red rebel now (which after all isn't probable) and went to quod, I couldn't exactly despise him, merely because your sister asked me. We men form up in war-time, don't we ? that is expected. Only, as soon as one of you flutters out against us, somehow or other, in spite of the beastly jam it is, the old formation exists.

[I am inclined to add, says Herbert, but that it is so superfluous, Shere never wrote anything like this kind of letter before: and above all, not to Linda. It is merely another proof, if proof were wanting, how we had all grown years older, wearily older, in those few inexpressible months.

It was Bess who sent Jamesie to Ireland, at the New Year, for Iveagh's good: just like her. She naturally wanted Jamesie herself. It was also for the good of my chronicle, for Jamesie in a new country is an immense asset. He was in three, I am thankful to say, before the end of things. How many he had been in since his birth, I should not care to state. He was born at Durban, and was a travelled person, hence his pleasing adaptability. Some of the following passages are ante-dated to the death of Steenie, evidently; but Jamesie never dated, and Iveagh rarely, in private life. I suppose the true Suir style is too spontaneous, bother them both !]

Jamesie, to Denise.

CHÈRE DENISE,

Vous êtes parfaitement tort malheureusement, et votre oncle aussi. C'est difficile à dire comment tort vous êtes sans le Dictionnaire ou Father. Irlande est un excellent épatant pays, et c'est notre. Ce ne sont

pas Traîtres ils sont différent qu' Anglais. C'est sotté à dire quand vous savez pas. Pardon, jour après voyage. Beaucoup d'amour !

JAMESIE.

The same, to Francis.

Thank you very much for the Card and the Joke. I showed Father, at Breakfast. Yes it is a very Long Way.* I came over with the Horseless Earl (he isn't one realy) and looked out hard for Submarines. I know what there like, Nurse's sister at Holmer saw one that dived right under her ship. It didn't want her then been† Red Cross, but now they do. Isn't it Horuble? So there wasnt a single Periscope so fars I could see. After that I was sick. But this side is very nice with a Library of heavenly smelling books. I know lots of people. I know Bridgie Haloran who is very Funy. I know Tims at Holmers Family. I know Katie Rochester a little not much. Are you learning French Francis? When are you going out? With salute

Yours truly

J. C. SUIR.

[*Been.* This mistake is invariable in the Jamesie letters. It is strictly phonetic, 'been' what he heard. He elaborates the theme of Katie in a letter to Kells, which Nurse confiscated, and then, in her immaculate style, sent it to Wickford, who gave it me.]

I know Gerry Rochester Tim mentioned and I know Katie a little. She calls Father Darling! He says its the way of the girl and I'm not to go there often. Sometimes she's angry then she asks why hes not at the war

* What can this joke have been?

† See below.

She's got a baby littler than ours.* I asked Father where its father was *privately* (because you know now he might be dead) and Father said fighting in France. So if Uncle Wick saw a soldier in an Irish Regiment called that† it would probly be him. Love to Nurse and Aileen.

Yours,

J. C. S. (Hon. O.T.C. etc.)

St. John Herbert, to Jamesie, experimental.

How is your father ?

Jamesie to Herbert.

Father is well I think, I saw him laughng. It was about the Jumping Lesson. I wanted to jump the Blackberry side of the Bohireen, because then I could be Cavalry charging a Barbed Wire Entanglement (the Blackberries). Perhaps they dont. Father said Id do fairly. Then we went home. And in the evening oh dear ! It did hurt so all my legs and where I sit down. Father seen it‡ said he was sorry. So I had my handkerchief‡ and the Button came out too, Bavarian, real, very like Gold, that M. Gabriel sent me. I had kept it in my pocket but it rold, under Col. Hamilton's chair. And so he looked at it. And so Father did. And so after that I showed him all the Letters and the Field Envelopes and everything, because he had time.

[Most significant, this. A Bavarian button, delicately kept from Jamesie's father's observation, had escaped control. An alarming instant: but Iveagh, cut off from

* He shares with Kells. † Rochester.

‡ Tears,—I asked Bess.

the army, and conscious of having over-jumped Jamesie, did not flinch. He even found time to digest Jamesie's military correspondence, enormous as I knew, including the envelopes. How I envied him ! I scarcely dared show this letter to Bess. When I did she let me have Iveagh's, like a good girl, to compare with it.]

Iveagh, to his wife.

I am sorry Bess, I overdid him. I forget the age he is. It was partly the horse he had was a fool, refusing for the fun of it, but I was worse. He held up well through dinner, poor little gossoon, Hamilton being with us. Luckily he had to leave early, or else he saw my vexation. My temper is really not dependable. I let Jim into the office where there was the leavings of a fire, and he showed me all those blessed letters he has collected exhaustively, in and out. The terms he knows are surprising, and not so very wild. Blakie and Tim and young Furniss all write to him, not to say Cardew and Ronald* and Shere. Having shown me the most of the stuff, Jim dropped asleep on me. So I took him to the room where he sleeps and a poor one it is, I wish you were here to make things prettier. And I undressed him, his head falling all ways, and having a fair chance I looked. He is not hurt to mention. I will keep him quiet by me these next days. He gets soft with that London life, my brother and I were harder. Perhaps I should let him come back to you when that man† comes over, will I ? I have been sulking like a brute for a week, and Jim has the benefit. Not a boy to be seen in the town, and the Geoghans above themselves with Tim's performances such that I fear to meet them. And even Katie is at it now, on

* Janet's brothers.

† Wickford.

Joyce's lines, mentioning Crawford to me unnecessarily. She tries to screw me up* with the high prices, I wish I had you to judge a little. It is hard living naturally, and you cannot reason with a girl like that, and she with a baby at the breast. To be sure she soon forgot and was loving me again, but that also has its drawbacks. She darlings me before the Hamiltons, and I leave you to imagine how that lets me in. I do not let the boy to her often, though she asks no better than to worship him as they all do. . . . This merely to tell you of the riding—I am sorry, my dear.

[The situation of Katie, exactly wrong way before as an Irish situation should be, curled me up with artistic appreciation; not Bess, who most probably did not follow it. Iveagh 'left her to imagine' in vain. She and Iveagh are not the least alike, they are astonishingly opposed by nature, and he must have shocked her Puritanism persistently, all the while he was teaching her life. His sentiments in her are now most easy to recognise: they are in a distinct partition from her own, under his aegis, as it were, and she studies them shyly at times, as she would read in a library some good author's broad book. Yet the teaching is complete, that I can answer for; nothing really of life can take Bess by surprise.

The war was a test for this real difference, for they were at once asunder in opinion, and widely. It was a wonder they did not quarrel: Iveagh would have if she had let him. Bess was linked on every side to the North Midland Quakers: any war, for whatever cause, was to her fundamental religious sense a disgrace to humanity. She never got used to this, nor saw it otherwise than at once loathesome and grotesque. I rather agreed with her, on the main issues,—Iveagh did not. He could not, coming of that race, his instincts were too primitive. All

* Financially.

his wife's relations stood out stiff against conscription; and she owned a second cousin, a city councillor aged forty, who was a distinguished example of what we now call a C.O. Iveagh, who had been patient with her, for him, struck at this point, and flatly forbade her to name the gentleman in Jamesie's hearing. I have the letter in which he said so. He went the whole way, and threatened censorship of the correspondence. It would keep Jamesie, he said, awake at nights 'dreaming of such deadliness,' and if he must read 'such,' he could read the talking in the Pilgrim's Progress. The literary side of me eagerly acquiesced in this: so Bess, armed with her C.O., and his controversy with his judges, carefully typed by a serious society, was disappointed in both of us.

I proceed, with this preface, to the business of the Bavarian Button. The Button figured, I think without exception, in all Jamesie's letters to everybody, for a month at least. It is clear his correspondents in the crack regiments did not spoil him in the matter of souvenirs.]

DEAR MOTHER,

I told about my Button to Joyce, and Mother she said she would not keep a thing that belonged to the Beastly Bavarians. Mother are they? And she said she would bury it and stamp the earth over not carry it on a Pink Cotton round my neck.

[Bess was awakened.]

Nobody [she replied], if they thought for one moment, would say that a whole nation was beastly, or any such stupid word. It could not be true, because there are always the little babies, and the children who can only believe what they are taught, and the nice people everywhere, and the very helpless old. Not one of these can

be beastly possibly, any more than a whole nation can be noble, or just. There were Bavarians, I know, were particularly kind to Joyce, only she has forgotten. It is her memories of that kindness that she wants to stamp the earth over, darling.

DARLING MOTHER,

Mary Geoghan has polished up my Button now and it looks like gold. She has a Helmet Tim sent her, but not Bavarian. Father and I went to the Fair to look at Farmhorses, and lots of Men saw it smiling when they passed. I saw a horse with a face you would have simply loved, but Father liked the back legs of the other better, so we bought him after lots of talking. Father is funiest realy. We had dinner at the Hotel. Mother, why did Joyce forget ?

War makes a difference [said Lady Iveagh]. Think, if you had known and liked a Denise in Germany, just as much as our dear Denise in France, and then we had made war on her people. Would you not have had to forget her ? Ask Father.

Mother, I did, and he says you can Shut it, preechin. Mother I thought about her lots and lots, simply all last night I wasn't asleep. I heard the stable clock three times. Its awful still I do know now. Look here. I would just write to her quitely and say Denise (not Dear been Public) it is a great Pity your army tries to fight us we are so strong on the map of the colunies it will simply certainly all be killed. So now that is all but Id like to know how you all go on your uncle Gabriel been a German Aviator (you see he would) can just fly and drop

it as soon as he sees some English soldiers having Breakfast. It needn't have a stamp. Yours without I'm afraid much else after the Belgians J.C.S. Well. Then Miss Kitchens friend could sew it in a Prisoner's Sack and ask the Prisoner getting it to post it if he saw a Box, because they do exercise, so that would be settled and Done. I'm sorry that I smuged but it makes it so awfully long explaining. I wish you were here Mother. Goodnight.

From
JAMESIE.

[There is nobody, declares Herbert, but Jamesie, who in forty-five minutes' steadfast thinking (thank heaven that clock strikes the quarters, I asked Iveagh), could have evolved two several ways of eluding the neutral censor's eye. The Avuncular Aviator is so divinely simple that I am hanged if I do not believe it must have happened. When I enquired of du Fretay, he said, if it had not it was going to, and I could tell Jamesie so.]

Look here, girl, will you shut it? It's sickening. It will do for him in addition to the work I give him, which is enough. He was as white and large-eyed after thinking all that out for you when he came to say goodnight to us, as he was when Byrne fetched him over this last time, and he sick off the sea. And all his arithmetic done right as well, it is enough to finish me at the end of a day's bothering to have to show a kid to the world so well-behaved. When, I ask you, did I deserve it? And then the men with me got hold of the letter and roared, which made it no better for him. It is not fair treatment. I just took him and told him all the rubbishy stories of moonlighting, ratting and thieving I could

think of for half an hour till I saw his colour come again. And when I had him laughing at me I did not want to lose him, only I did my duty by your memory. Do you remember the age he is? How is a kid that size to catch hold of questions that dish us all? Harping on friendships, I tell you it will be nobody's fault but yours if it turns into something else and we have him in love with a French girl at seven years old. I began young you may remember, and my father also. Now perhaps you'll drop evangelising. And as if he needed it. I took him to church on Sunday as you said, and the lesson we had was inconvenient. I was certain he would have at me after, saw him loading up for it, but luckily a hen came in. There is always that chance in the churches here, that the poultry and such may save you. He talked about that hen going home, and me encouraging him feverishly. He only got on to the Testament lesson towards the end of dinner, and by then I had the courage in me to come down. And then Byrne, who we went to see at Glentooly says he is the picture of my father, with a San Greal speciality mounted. San Greal! Fancy my desperate feelings when myself had taught him to ride. . . .

[Bess promptly weeded out the elemental in the above, and flung it back at him.]

How can you suggest such things, Iveagh, about Denise and Jamesie? It is you who do not remember his age. Please be careful what you say to him on the subject, he takes her so very seriously. I told Janet, and she is just as displeased as I am. She says Wickford does the same thing when she does not watch him. Have you, Janet says, any suspicions of Aileen?—because she had

rather know. You must have been rather nasty, both of you, living in the stables when you were seven, hardened and so on, I do not the least want to hear about it. I am glad I did not know you. Sir James seems to have been telling shocking things about your youth to Jamesie, so I warn you, he will not take you for a model, at this rate, long. Censor my letters if you dare, I shall go on doing it. It is the only way to keep him respectable. I am sorry about your trials, darling. Don't be anxious about J., he is strong, and I perfectly trust you. I can go on doing without him for a little while. Has Katy got clothes enough for that baby? Ask her.

E. S.

[This letter being too critical, possibly, Iveagh did not hide it in a magpie hole. He let it lie about his office at the Castle, and Sir James Byrne picked it up. Byrne being of my own profession, possessed no conscience. He read it first, stole it second, and lastly, gave it to me. I ought perhaps to say a word of Judge Byrne, so many of the Jamesie letters mention him. He was Jamesie's namesake and godfather, and Iveagh's ally and sustainer through life. He had loved and upheld Iveagh throughout his unregenerate youth, seconding him vigorously against his parents; and now it became a new-born delight to him to give Iveagh away to Jamesie. He was a conscience-less person. It was he brought Jamesie over to the shores of his fathers, and put him, pastorally as it were, into Iveagh's arms. 'Iveagh and I,' said Byrne, 'were shuddering with sentiment on the occasion; but Jamesie was shuddering with something far else. He turned sick at the end, as some children do, having looked out for submarines happily all the way across. Being an old bachelor, I was delighted to get rid of him, but more than a little paralysed to see no woman there. That is the way the boy always gets me, for he took it

on him easily. I saw how his wife had trusted him. from that moment. He is never afraid, Iveagh, never the least afraid.' Byrne was prejudiced, naturally: still, I set this beside the Duke's 'bread-and-butter courage,' as interesting.

I proceed to the 'play,' as Wickford always called it, an incident taken with extreme calm by the Irish section, though it produced an immense stir, as shall be seen, in Jamesie's England at the front. Jamesie, just so soon as action comes along, steps into his proper shoes as hero.]

The Duke, to Judge Byrne, with enclosure following.

Is the boy off it? He writes the weirdest letters nowadays. Is there by any chance not room for the two of us on my property? What is he playing at, tell me kindly.

W.

Iveagh, to the Duke, offered for the Judge's commentary.

The clearing on the front* is going strongly, so let you be at rest about it. You would be surprised if you saw how nice, with that woman's† money, we have made the town. Most of the people are quite pleased, thanks to Jamesie's persuasion upon their taste. He is of use to me, the way he points out on his own the artistic advantages, while I make play with the drains and so forth. But it is needed nowadays, since other things are not so easy. . . . I am sorry Adair is gone, and Werner—odd to think he was an Austrian originally.

* River-front.

† Janet.

Ingestre's wound is nothing, I have the doctor's word for it. He is coming to Glentooly to recruit at Easter, what time Byrne has finally decided to let the fishing and the house. . . . He asked me to join them. I can't, of course, but the letter was very nice. He is just the same, and he addresses me as it might be anybody. He said the German question was easier than this,* and would be shorter, which is likely. The nature of the people is easier. I had sooner deal with Bethmann Hollweg, any day, than with Bridgie Halloran when she calls to mind Crawford's English fashion of evicting her, and forgets the fact she is in a much better house. It is the cats she regrets really, they ran about the heather, and she never got back more than six of them. It was the one true cause of Patie Halloran's not enlisting. Now, Bess would have found that out for me sooner, would she not? It's a hundred pities, for cats and little things like that, I have not Bess with me here. . . . Having remarked so much, I come to business. If you get your leave long enough, wait for a note before you come to me. Do not mind the elegant telegrams we send you, because the post-people see those. Only notice what I say under cover, which I pray to Providence they do not see. I wish there were riders now for messages, or I had a wireless station. The chances are, at the time you mean, you had better keep out of it. And yet Lord knows I'd like you for a lot of things. We are really getting through some of it at last. Jim's regards to the Generals.

Yours ever,
I. S.

* Irish.

Judge Byrne, to the Duke.

Come, man alive ! Can you not read through that how sorely you are wanted ? Give him your countenance at least in the work he is doing, it is too hard on mortal else. You ought to have shown your face long since, in Crawford's time, as I told you persistently, and Janet too. You have to come to the scratch, with the fickle foolish people they are. The nettle will tickle always until you grasp it, and properly, which he is doing this long while in your name. You are rapidly growing no more than a name to them, and that is dangerous, and the harder on him that his is a personality they are bound to love. I am not afraid to say this to you, Conor. . . . He was never less demented, I can assure you, but he is bothered thoroughly, and believes every breath of trouble he hears. I am not an optimist myself, but he is lower than I am, being on a level with the reports that reach him by every idle tongue. It is his misfortune that being quiet he is good company, and gets himself talked to, and too much. It is said that Marvin is back in the country, and Rochester that idle lad along with him, spreading disaffection to the soldiers, and anxious to have you down. I believe sincerely there is nothing in it : Marvin might keep that old grudge of his, but Gerry is completely daft. He has long had visions and what not, and it annoys Iveagh to death how he hangs about Jamesie. . . . Lately it seems he has inspired his sister in his interest, at least from Katie the slut she has become Kathleen (so the boy himself told me) and does the prophetess to such an extent that she neglects the child. She has been injured by the English, you will observe, such that the allegory would

be complete to admiration, were it not that most of the neighbours know she was willing enough. As for there being room for you, you need not question it, so far as concerns him. He is being daily as disagreeable as he can manage, and he flings snubs abroad by the handful whenever he does me the honour to ride out with me. But what's the good of it with a child like that at the back of him? With the likeness to your father he carries, and the little sweet tongue of him, and the love of beast and man to boot? Come along, shirker, come out of that army you are so fond of. Do not let your wife or new child or anything keep you from your plain duty here.

Love to her and believe me

Yours

J. C. BYRNE.

[This impetuous apostrophe, from a man the family respected, had its natural consequence. Wickford got away for as long as he wanted with shameful ease, and enjoyed a little holiday on the farther shore. A dramatic interlude.]

Jamesie, answering Shere, punctual as ever.

DEAR CAPT. LD SHERE

Thank you for the Card with the Cannon. We have had a shooting here, a real one. Uncle Wick had stayed behind, talking about Kitchener to Col. Hamilton. We were in the cart. I was driving. Father told me to hold him,* and he would clear the way round the Unlucky Corner, because some times there are stones. So he pretended I think. And next there were 3 shots, real, I

* The horse.

heard them. And the Horse wanted to see what was hapening. So we went on, and there he was in the road ! And he woaed because Father put his arm up lukily. I couldn't have him stopt.* And I saw the Bleeding. Lukily Uncle Wick came then, and said I must drive on and tell them. So I did, and there was nobody at the Farm ! It was horubly dark there. So I went on a ' long, long Way ' to Glentooly, and there was a Doctor staying there. And he was in Uniform, but he had time for us. So he came with me. And he knew Father he said. So that was all Right. Don't you like this intrust-ing letter ? With Salute

Yours truly
J. C. SUIR.

Shere to Wickford, telegram from France.

Where are you ? What is up ? Have they been gun-running in your country ?

Cardew to Janet, telegram from France.

What is this Jamesie tells Jack of shooting ? Is Suir hurt ?

Francis to Herbert, postcard from France.

Do I understand from Tim Lord Iveagh is hurt ? I hope not serious.

Tim to Mary Geoghan, postcard from France.

Your last produced a shandy-dan, let us have some more of it for the sake of love. We had been yawning here.

Judge Byrne to Janet, telegram from Dublin.

Conor is quite well, has telephoned me. Iveagh wounded slightly. Discredit all print till we write.

Wickford to Janet, telegram from Castle Wickford.

Get Bess to come here and bother Mother. He is worked out.

Janet to the Dowager, telegram from London.

Accident Ireland, not serious. Doctor wants Bess. Have sent Kitchin to replace till further orders. Am writing.

Wickford to the interviewer, verbal message.

Make it clear, if you must, that the matter is long known to us, the man a keeper dismissed for dishonesty. It is an entirely private affair.

The Greatest of the Morning Papers, paragraph.

The Duke of Wickford was shot at on Saturday, while on a flying visit to his Irish estate. That the attempt was prompted by an active political agency, sustained by enemy funds and propaganda, is denied. It is said to be the outcome of a private grievance. Two individuals suspected by the police are in custody.

The Dowager to the Duchess, telegram from Boulogne.

Very well, shall have to come to London on short leave. Warn Wickford.

The same, to the Duke, by letter.

Very well, a single explanation would do. I really have no need of such flocks of excuses from you and Janet. One would think I was a tyrant, and unaware of the duties marriage entails. It is perfectly right of Elizabeth to go, if Iveagh requires her; and your supporting the demand would make it the less avoidable, naturally. I am far less inclined than you seem to think to find fault with Elizabeth, who has proved herself a remarkably reliable girl. About the child, too, she really has a grievance. It is extraordinary of Iveagh to take him away from her and his education for so long. Breaking a child's habits in that way, apart from all other drawbacks, is neither in accordance with my principles, nor with those of your wife. James would be much better quietly in London, either with Janet, whose Nurse is trustworthy, or with Elizabeth, who has plenty of time for her own affairs. Even in this moment of National need, I should not ask all a young married woman's time, that is ridiculous. There was a rush of course at first, but lifelong principles, especially at my age, are not easily obliterated. Please give Elizabeth the enclosed, containing a question or two about the bales, which Miss Kitchin is unable to answer. I should like to be sure of her at her London address by Wednesday, if that is not asking the impossible. *You* I fear I shall miss at this rate, since I only have the two days. It is tiresome about Iveagh's knee, I suppose that will put him off again.* How on earth did he manage to do it, unless he was playing football with his gun? He always did have the most outlandish accidents.

* From service.

*The Duchess, to the same, carried all unaware by
Lady Iveagh.*

No, dear, stay a little, it will make her happier. We are so absurdly shy, coming into the colony, and would like, please, to get behind you. Besides, it is the fair return. I can do your mother perfectly. Stay, unless of course you find yourself too dreadfully out of it, then come back to us. Too sweet she is—when I called her and said I had cleared everything out of the path for ten days, she turned as pink as a—bride. Though of course dreadfully business-like. Now she will nurse him, with propriety, and both will have such a nice time, getting round you, and both, for the look of the thing, would so much sooner you were there. O sweet and lovely wall! Aren't you? Now say I don't know them.

JANET.

[I got the scenery—what du Frettay calls the decoration—of Wickford's play out of Bess, who came back after the stated ten days, and resumed work, demurely. I intercepted her as soon as I could—I think it was in a tea-shop. She was looking well—well is a good word: and unprofessional, surprisingly. To anyone who valued her on the serious side, as the Dowager did, such a change must have been painful.]

'Have you got Jamesie?' I started naturally.

'Not yet,' said Bess. 'I applied for him.'

'Weren't your papers in order?' I said with sympathy. 'I say, why not try your marriage lines? I ought to tell you, Bess, your mother-in-law has been in town.'

'No!' Bess looked humble at once. 'Has she, St. John?'

'Rather—looking for you. Do you mean they never told you? She was surprised to find so many of her own telegrams. She worried Miss Kitchin like a rat, and she kept on wondering where Wickford was. She had an idea, when she came over, her leave crossed with his.'

Bess glanced at me. She was wearing her Red Cross expression in honour of her mother-in-law, which was very clever.

'Did you explain?' she said.

'Well—as I could. Which did you walk out with?'

'I didn't,' said Bess. 'I stayed at home. Mine can't walk, to call walking.'

'Can't he? Why not. I thought Marvin shot him in the arm.'

'So he did—clean through. The most beautiful thing,' said Bess with sudden enthusiasm, 'you ever saw.' She sobered. 'But he kicked his own gun in falling, and landed the charge in the other knee; at least, that is what Wickford says. He says he lit a little flash and burnt himself. You may take it either way. Anyhow he fell over several rocks, which habitually strewed the road; and the result of it all is—well—'

'Not beautiful.' I grimaced involuntarily. 'Duller for you, let's say.'

'It was horridly dull. I mightn't touch it.'

'Did he hit you?' Bess nodded. Then she looked aside. I saw I should have to make an effort to get further. She does not tell me much about Iveagh ever, and I doubt if she says a word about me to him. She is an eminently cautious girl.

'There was nothing for me, then,' I suggested, gazing

at my notebook, which I had laid beside me on the tea-shop table. She knows about it, as Francis does.

'I am afraid not, St. John,' said Bess, turning over her private knowledge. 'It wasn't War. There was not a touch of khaki in it anywhere—except Wickford's cap.'

'What had Wickford's cap to do with it?'

'It was part of the pretending. Ask Jamesie.'

'Bess, you are a tiresome girl! I believe you have been having the time of your life, with the two of them, in that divine place. It is divine, isn't it?'

'Heavenly. I saw the place where it all happened—extremely paintable, all in crooks. A crooked wall comes down to a crooked road, which crosses a crooked gully by a broken bridge. Not quite so broken as it was in their father's time, Wick said they had begun to mend it. But it wasn't very safe, and there was a nice sign-post suggesting that motors should go back, and round by the road. I don't suppose the warning had ever been necessary, but it was nice.'

'Thank you,' I said. 'At least I am getting on a little.'

'They call it,' Bess pursued, 'The Unlucky Corner. They all used to leap the wall there, apparently for the pleasure of coming off. It would have been instant death, with the gully in front unguarded, for any but my husband's family. It made me perfectly ill to think of Jamesie trying it. But he is considered too young.'

'I am glad of that,' I said. Bess drew in again, after her unusual excursion. 'It sounds a little awkward,' I suggested.

'It is, a little. You have to turn in the air, like a circus, if you want to get all four legs of your horse to

fit the road. The stones, always in new places, make it more interesting. As a rule, only mine managed it. What happened to the others he did not say. I suppose,' said Bess, dreamily, 'it was by old habit he expected an accident there.'

'Oh, he did, did he? Is *yours* superstitious?'

'Iveagh? Frightfully.' She looked at me, and closed up again.

'Hum. So he expected it. Invited it, possibly—in Wickford's cap.'

'Oh, St. John! What have you been reading?'

'Jamesie's letter to Francis. He lost Francis's new number, and sent it here.'

'Then I shan't talk,' said Bess, with a bright idea, 'to people who read private letters.'

And she did not. That was the end of it.

Jamesie, to Francis.

['Been' the best expression of seven-year-old rapture I ever read. Evidently Suir, when he could do it, did it thoroughly.]

I will tell you a Joke, as good as yours. Presently I will. Now I have seen him (because I have) its getting funier and funier until I simply Had to turn headoverheels in a place [Blot.] There now there's a good bit of Sand in my hair. Well its about our Shooting. You heard all that stuff. Well he did pretend, in Uncle Wick's Army* Cap! He told me as an Awful Secret. They wouldn't if he hadnt, I told him squeesing and he believed. And fetching the Doctor was a Score for us

* See below.

he said all that. Oh dear I did laugh. I was afraid he would be diferent but he never is. Uncle Wick is been fater but he isnt. This is a horuble Sandy Letter this time cant be helped. Goodbye dear Francis.

JAMESIE.

[Francis sent this letter back to me for admiration, never guessing I could have opened it en route: so that I had a chance of studying it a second time. I think—I speak open to correction—the fact that the cap so used was Army was a large part of the joke, to Jamesie. He shared with Kells, and most other children of the period, an awestricken veneration for the outer symbols of war. It was, among other delightful things, incredibly impertinent of his father to use that cap. His references to the ‘doctor in uniform’ convey the same attitude to the official world: an attitude which, by the way, backs up du Frettay’s contention that Jamesie was not Irish, internally.]

I proceed to what may be called the practical witnesses, the Duke and the Doctor.]

St. John Herbert, to the doctor in question.

DEAR ASHWIN,

I do not want to waste your time, since I hear you are just starting. Are the following details correct as to Jamesie Suir’s part in what Wickford calls the ‘play’ in Ireland? Am I lifting him to the heroic place unnecessarily? I want to keep proportion, if it is ever possible in that blessed land.

Yours etc.

The doctor, to Herbert.

DEAR HERBERT,

You cannot exalt Jamesie too much for me. It was a firstclass feat, because he was frightened. He was aware of the risks, and still he did the job, which another child would not. He must have driven five miles, alone with a strong horse, on a vile road, in dense shadow and thin moonlight alternately. I did it just after him, so I could reckon the chances exactly. When John and I went out to him, he was terrified, and in tears; but he gave me his uncle's messages lucidly, and entreated to show me the way. From the minute he heard I was a doctor, he held on to me tight. The women wanted to keep him at Glentooly. I took him, of course, and got the chief part of the history out of him as we drove. The duke is a singularly poor hand at a tourniquet—perhaps for a duke not singular—so we were at the bridge none too soon. The rest of your details are all right. John was witness to the scene on the Glentooly drive, good enough for any novel. Apply to him rather than the women about Jamesie. I am fairly satisfied with young Suir, but would rag him longer if I had time. Do not ask him for my character. I hope the board will settle him, when he gets there, and teach him his place in the scheme of things. But I have small hope of it, 'pistonné' as he is. I am thankful to be out of such rubbish.* Goodbye till the war's over.

Yours.

C. C. A.

* Medical boards ?

[I applied, as advised, to Ingestre. I gave him a broad hint, like Ashwin, to give me facts and keep off philosophy, but as will be seen, he barely managed it. He was wounded, after a fair dose, which may account. I think, by internal evidence, Suir must have fagged for him at Eton.]

John Ingestre Esq., to Herbert.

Rather—the best apparition you ever saw. All in the Irish moonlight, against a pitch-black pile of trees. He fell into the middle of dinner, and turned us all out to admire him. He had no use for us, though, only for Ashwin. Do you want a description of Suir minimus? No. He was crying, but not a bit confused. We got his heredity right after the doctor was gone, and while the car was appearing. Father started in character by observing Iveagh had no right to have a son of the age. I proved by Eton dates Iveagh was welcome to, if he chose, and disappointed Father. Then they proceeded to the bilge Crawford put about London as to Suir minor being a Sinn Fenian, and having refused to enlist. So I settled that, being on the subject, and disappointed them again. I let Father and Major Burge unload the stuff they had accumulated first, the women listening, religiously. Women are so religious in this war, in the sense of wanting to believe the indecently improbable. Don't tell my wife I said that. Anyhow after that they listened just as religiously to me. Since I have been out they do, that is the beauty of it. Besides, I like Iveagh, sulky little beast, and he always admired me extremely. He is exactly fitted at this moment to be king of Connaught, and live in a cave. Suir minimus would do him proud as an heir-apparent, wouldn't he?

Father said he was sorry finally, Major Burge did not, which proves all sorts of things. Anyhow he is not the new army. I took the car to the Unlucky Corner, a place I remember painfully. Iveagh's custom was to show his guests the way over, at fourteen years old. I did not get the car quite to it, certainly, but I got within hearing: then I blew my horn at intervals for Ashwin's edification. Finally he joined me, looking pretty fierce, with Suir minor, that is mine, and the Duke in his shirt-sleeves. He had taken off his tunic not to frighten the kid. (Minimus was in the cart, during these performances.) 'It's like Cain I am,' the Duke observed to me pleasantly (I think he did)—I hadn't come across him since Eton. I said he was worse than the corpse, and I couldn't admit him into Father's car. He was ready to play the ass as well, with relief. You see he had never known, for a whole hour, at what point Marvin might not resuscitate amid the ferns, and shoot again. No fun for him. . . . Asses they are, blighters, not even able to shoot a duke down. Oh Lord, it's Ireland all over that. No one would have regretted Wickford. Not that he is a bad fellow, but another of the same sort would have done as well. You have only to tack a title to him, send him to France which is the fashion, and get somebody to brush his hair. Like Alice in Wonderland.*

I haven't any more, of moment. Oh yes, I forgot to say Gerry Rochester got in later to Glentooly, a bad second to Suir minimus, and was received tenderly by the girls. They gave him my dinner, mine, and he finished all the whisky. When I said he was a criminal, a conniver at manslaughter, together with a maniac,

* I asked Ingestre to explain this, but he forgot.

they were incredulous, or indifferent. They said he was 'so Irish.' There you are. English sentiment has been the ruin of this country, not Irish, they haven't any. All the drivel in their modern literature, which is largely drivel, we have mixed in. No wonder they want to get rid of us. . . .

The Duke, to Judge Byrne.

[*Note*—Anyone who likes may skip the following, which is merely the facts. As a personality, Ingestre truly says, nobody would miss Wickford. I thank thee, Ingestre, for teaching me that word. It must be why my instinct is to leave out most of his letters.

S. H.]

MY DEAR BYRNE,

We were both wrong and he right: this by way of prologue before I answer your telegram.

He is anything but killed, and contented to have got round me, only in great pain from his knee. Marvin shot him clean through the left shoulder, how near extinction I dare not think, and falling he got mixed with his own gun, which he had steadied against the bridge, so as to pepper the other leg. To make all complete he jarred the same knee badly as he went over, complicating what might else have been an easy case, easy I mean considering he was aimed at by Marvin and himself, both very tidy marksmen, in the course of a single night. I did not observe the lower details at the time, being fully concerned to stop the bleeding above, which I did not specially succeed in as I lack the first-aid tricks every kid of fourteen knows now. My sister-in-law, just arrived, is grieved at my ignorance, and Ashwin stronger than grieved. Indeed it is a pity for the boy,

since he cannot spare it, being already worked out with my business as you said. I thought as sure as I write this I should have him dead on my hands before the doctor came. I would very probably have killed Marvin in my rage, only Rochester, realising the mistake, did me the favour of knocking him out with the butt of the gun. After which utility, Gerry turned to helping me as much as a half-bake can help. Such are our conspirators in this forgotten country.

As for the little play on the bridge, I will make no remarks as you know Iveagh. So far as I can pick up from Jamesie (himself being useless and scorning my natural emotion) it was a bit of sheer divilment of the old sort. He was driven by the great need to prove me wrong. I had been mocking him at the station about Marvin, and to Jamesie's face, which was rash of me. He said little, though while we drove I saw he was looking about. We had (what was twice over a providence) a quiet horse, chosen to instruct Jim in driving. With the kind of animal Iveagh chooses for himself, we should have been utterly done. Hamilton crossed us at the turn to Dunshaden, and exclaimed at me. I got down to speak to him. Iveagh let the child drive on, since the light was bad, and there might be stones at the corner. At least, that was his excuse. Since, I am certain he reckoned, if an accident happened, on its happening there. (He may also have reckoned on his own immunity. Set him up. I am extremely vexed with him still, and the more the more I think.) The cart drew up short of the corner, as a fact. Jim says he 'pretended' if you follow that nursery expression. When I got out to Hamilton, I had left my odd clothes in the cart. My lord sang out to Jim to wait till his 'father' came,

as he was going forward to look for stones. He took, for this purpose, my cap on him, and my coat across his shoulder. Likewise I suppose he primed his gun, fit for any rabbits he should chance to see. He stood on the bridge to observe the scenery, especially in the bottom of the glen, what light there was full on him. There is no doubt in my mind that he thanked God when Marvin's gun spoke out, since it proved him right against me. That it went through his own arm was an after-thought. And he calls himself parent to that nice respectable child !

There was a second report, and the echo, as I reckon. You will find Jim says three. But both the last were drowned by Gerald's yelling as he leapt upon Marvin—really horrid it was. I am not going to begin to account for Gerry's proceeding, I leave it to you, Judge, with your deep knowledge of the country, and my own disqualifications. If Marvin had got me, I suppose, in his lovely fervour, Gerry would have put in another shot. How he spotted the mistake is a mystery, unless my brother spoke or challenged. That may be. Anyhow, he downed the big keeper in no time, and later, Marvin was quite hard to find among the fern. It is true, I heard him groaning while I attended to Iveagh, but I was singularly uninterested. Except for Ashwin, he might have groaned all night for me. Personally I thought it was poaching, naturally. I vaulted the wall lower up* the road to get down to the scrimmage quickly. I had been walking quietly after the cart. I half throttled Rochester, dragged him off Marvin, and requested politely to learn what was the sport. Gerry only jabbered his rubbish, pointing at the bridge, which looked

* Is this English ?

empty. I can tell you it was not nice. I called, and Jim answered me, bless his little voice. 'Father is here, I think—the horse has found him.' How I got up to the bridge do not ask, for the gully in a bad light is beastly. Gerry shadowed me with infernal ease, though I could have done without him. However, he was sober enough when he saw the blood, and had the sense to fetch water, though with a deliberation that distracted me, fearing as I was to see the boy go out on my hands. I have had a few bad turns in France this winter, but none approaching it—how could I? And yet it was a near thing, owing to that cursed exhaustion, Ashwin said.

The luck of getting his own doctor was beyond hope or wonder. I could not believe it when he told me—it was Iveagh told me, before he fainted the second time. I thought he was raving: yet there was the probability, not to mention even at the last gasp it is he has all the sense. . . . Ashwin was at Glentooly, for the end of the week, gone to have a look at Ingestre's wound before he moved east, there was the fact,—a fluke if you like. But barring a second fluke, I would never have got him, though I primed the idiot, and posted him off. I had already despatched the child to the farm. You will see by Jim's account how he found the farm untenanted, and did not come back, but forward on his own by the Glentooly road. How many children would have gone forward, at that point, after the shots, and in the darkness, with a horse and cart to manage? How would my fine Kells have figured, in that situation? I have a cursed patronising letter from Kells, that curled Iveagh up, but did not amuse me. The contrast is humiliating, as is the rest of it. I am used to being humbled, in this company,

—but I am glad to be here. You were right to make me face death and destruction to get the facts. Are you aware his best friend has cut him dead for six months, and he only mentioning it casually, as if it were the commonest thing? I never thought it out for him, for an instant, though even so, I doubt if I would have spared him. The style of the place, the way every blessed thing is engineered and under weigh, managed even better than his boasting. That is him, is it not? he betters his boasting, always: which is what Kells does not. . . .

[The following suggests that Lady Aileen was in clandestine correspondence with her father's groom.]

DEAR AILEEN,

I drove him 5 miles (English) that is 1 mile and 4 miles, to Hallorans then Glentooly. I have found out by the map. He did pull! Father says it is not Driving to be Draged. But I did really because once he wanted not to seen Stables. Please tell Tim when you write as I have no time for Proper letters.

Your loving
JAMESIE.

[The next called forth all his efforts.]

DEAR JAMESIE,

We should be glad to know here how Lord Iveagh is if you have leisure for a nice account.

Your affectionate
NURSE.

DEAR NURSE,

I just waited a day because Mother came sudenly ! She is splendacious in white with Red Crosses (Uncle Wick said splendacious). Father told her to go back to her Militry, but she didnt. She is staying a Week ! Time to see everything. Oh dear, I'm glad.

Father's arm is nothing but his knee isn't, that is a longer Job. He says he can't ride for nuts and his Comission will probly be Cavalry. I think that serous and so does Mother, but Uncle Wick says there isn't any Cavalry now. My Doctor goes on coming in Uniform Father doesn't want him specially. He told him so ! ! I think that is enough to be Court Martialed but it is his knee. Dear Nurse goodbye now.

Your loving
JAMESIE.

Kells to the Duke. Unspeakably badly typed on the Holmer machine.

DEAR FATHER,

I am being secretry in Miss Kitchin's absense. Mother says 'I may try.' I frwrd Grdmother's letter abt Aunt bess. Last night Aileen and I thought of something good for uncle Iveagh choosing horses for the ARMY because he does it well. I am trying all the Stops ? ! . . with love— : —;

[KELLS.]

The Duke to Kells—prompt.

MY DEAR SON,

I have something to say to you privately. When you think out uses, by night, for my relations, and wish to confide in me, do not drag your sister into it. It is

better to stand alone. You are quite right, your uncle would choose horses for the army excellently well, as he has done for his ungrateful nephews before now. Shall I tell him, when he is better, your suggestion? Up to now he has only administered our estates (yours in prospect) past all praising, and saved my life. Are you aware of this? Is it of any value to you? Answer this.

Your father,
WICKFORD.

Kells to the Duke, autograph, elegant.

(Private.)

DEAR FATHER,

(1) Yes, Mother told me. (2) I am very glad he was instead of you because of the Army and besides I am glad otherwise. It is all for the best. I write this unknowing to the children.

Your affectionate son,
KELLS.

Jamesie to Kells.

Uncle Wick didnt laugh at your letter the last time but Father simply culapsed. Mother was surprised because she was doing him then. So she had to start again but she saw the letter and liked it too. I read the other one. You do type nicely do me one next with lots of stops. We are getting on Splendidly here. Whats the other Baby like? Mother went to see Katie's, I took her, and Katie was that time polite only staring. Of course that was the 1st time she saw Mother. Love to Nurse and Biscuit and Aileen,

Yours truly,
J. C. SUIR (R.I.C., etc.)

M. du Frettay, into the middle of all this.

Pourquoi les quatre mille quelquechoses tu t'embusques comme ça ?

Iveagh, to M. du Frettay.

Keep it in, I'm coming. I might have to wait a little while till I have another leg, and the girl has done playing with my shoulder. She does it very well considering, but I doubt if I could shoot a rabbit as yet. Rifle-shooting with the right arm only is a thing I left out, but as luck has it I am able to write, so you will get the benefit. I suppose you have an address these days, you give no sign. Or are you in the sky continuously, and that is why your blessings drop upon me unsigned, and nothing at the top of the paper? However, I recognised the style, so did he. I looked for your last, or rather she did, but could not find it, if it was ever there at all. It is true I leave the things in the office about a bit, as she observes, but only so as to fall under my eye when I want them. So I send this by way of your people, with Jim's.

Come down a little to see me, when I am in Paris, because the chances are I will have some time off, the sort of thing he is getting me. We had just been settling, when your compliments came, for the next year or so none of us will have much to do. The girl means to come over too, being overworked by my mother in London. We have talked it out, since she is here, and agreed for the boy's education it would be advisable. It is a pity for him to stick too long in one place, even if the place is a good one. He has got on a bit here. He rides as well as most kids, and drives quite decently.

I would not have time though these next months to see to him, so she will do it. And Gabriel, see here. Let your mother not let on to my mother if the shopping-places in Paris are better than in London, because that would dish us entirely, Bess would be roped in again. There are things now you can't refuse, I mean if you are a woman. He or I would send Mother to glory if she fagged us that way, but she cannot. Wickford's wife herself has had a struggle of it. Well, owing to these outside things, Bess has had to stay at pen's length of us the entire winter.* It is not natural for a boy the age Jim is, I saw how he met her this time, and I have had enough of it. I want my wife now for my purposes. She can help in the hospitals, if she wants to, that is her own look-out. But my mother overdoes things, you may remember, especially at the first go-off; and she expects all women she meets to be as bustling (erased) as busy as herself.

The Duke, to the same.

[As I guess, previous to the last, since the Duke dates his letters.]

Will you shut it, du Fretay, chucking your insults about the place? I tell you he is simply not fit to stand the sort of thing. It was himself informed me you were jesting, or you would have heard of it. I am a little concerned in this, you notice, being responsible. He turned as white as you please, and frightened Bess: and he took good care to observe it was foolery before he handed it to me. Just as well, for the joke, in my

* Cf. his mother's opinions.

judgment, is not a good one. I would have thought you had learnt, by now, it is easy to say things which it is better not to write, and especially not upon a postcard. However, if you care to know the rights of this. . . . [*He proceeds to relate, somewhat more baldly than to Byrne, the contents of this section.*] Iveagh will never tell you himself, so I had better do it. The truth is, I should not have thought it necessary, if I had not seen that card. And I should not have seen the card if he could have concealed it, or rather the shock it made. So now you know my ideas. . . . Do not believe the papers, English least of all, on the subject of Ireland. Wait till I find you, wherever it next happens to be, and I will inform you myself. You can take his opinions, but salt them well, for he has not half my reading. He goes, in political matters, generally speaking, on what he and Jamesie pick up at the Fair. . . .

M. du Frettay, at leisure, to Wickford.

Ce n'est pas embêtant ce que vous me racontez là. C'est chicment plus amusant que ce qu'on présente de mon côté, également lugubre et fade. . . .

M. du Frettay, immediately, to Iveagh.

MON CHER PETIT,

It is true? Thou occupiest thyself, as Wickford has just told me, in crocking* thy knee of the perfect rider, by dint of constituting thyself sole guardian of his interests against a swarm of emissaries *boches*? It must be truth, since the *Daily Mail* sustains me in the sublime supposition. You will shortly come and recount

* Foulcr.

all that to me, will you not, without the ordinary interpolations of your elder brother, whose restricted outlook always did fatigue us. Show him this, that he may see, until I have time to write to him, how little I value his high morality, compared with the vigorous truths culled by you in the agricultural reunions, and dazzlingly expressed by Jamesie to my niece Denise. I find that little green goose of a Denise, by the way, poseuse like the majority of her kind, has not done your son the honour to reply to him lately. Whence this idea arrived to her—possibly at the school she frequents—it is useless to inquire, but by way of my mother I have reproached her briskly for her laziness. Not that Jamesie gains much by her snobbish letters. Sapristi, the education of our girls ! . . . Let my Lady Bess come soon, for so long past my mother has needed her: and observe, the third floor flat where my library is housed stands now untenanted. Parbleu, she might even dust my books ! This occurs to my pen, as I write, but do not tell her, merely our most graceful messages. Seriously, it would be a solace to me to know my mother under her eye, since she frets, I fear, in secret. Enfin, since we all want her as soon as we think of her, let her arrive, and rapidly: but do not stay yourself, for the love of Heaven, upon a hot terrestrial horse ! No, no, you are too good for it. Come up, it is the only way, I assure you, to be cool, and to see things. This European occurrence is large, as it were voluminous. As an artistic ensemble, you get nothing whatever from down below. Accept the presentation of Wickford, naturally, and together with it as many good horses as he will give you. Stay there a month or two for courtesy's sake, then make a fuss*

* Réclamer.

about some detail in the equipment, exchange, and come up with me. Not with me, precisely, but parallel. We are more separated, alas, by this new régime, than we were of old. But at least you know the elements. And what the devil is the good of a duke for a brother, if you may not choose yourself your occupation? In the aristocratic constitution of your imperial army you are certain, with such backing, and an expletive or two, to have what you want. It is not even as though we were up to date, we have gone back centuries. You have but to eat the filthy food they give us here to be certain of that. Invite me to your popote or whatever it is if you see a chance of contiguity. Having heard something of your commissariat arrangements, I am all for the Understanding in the question of food. I embrace as many of you as will accept it, or as you yourself will allow me to embrace. This I think takes aim* at the entire family as at present assembled.

Thine always,

G. DU F.

Jamesie, to Sophie.

CHÈRE SOPHIE,

Vous serez intressé à savoir que nous allons en France. Quel damage que vous ne venez pas voir Francis! Pas justice qu' une Famille Anglaise va et non vous. Mother dit, avez-vous Messages ou n'importe chose, ou si votre Poilu-frère a Permission voulait il venir nous voir? Moi déjà j'invite Francis mais il dit Permissions Français à Paris sont plus commune. Faut connaître beaucoup de Generals comme Father pour avoir l'autre. C'est damage, n'est ce pas? Denise

* Viser.

n'est pas Colère avec moi parce que maintenant elle recommence écrire simplement Quantités, comme habitude. C'est bonne chose que j'ai jamais arrêter ! Je vous aime parce que vous répondez toujours directement, même petite Enveloppe gris. Prochain lettre avec Timbre Français figurez ! Quoi veut dire ça Fouler dans Denise's lettre ?

Avec compliment Mademoiselle,
JAMESIE.

Sophie, to Jamesie.

MONSIEUR, MON CHÉRI,

Cela me désole que vous partiez, bien qu' à une pareille destination. Vos visites nous manqueront à tous, à Holmer et à Londres. Dîtes à votre Maman que je n'ai rien pour le moment, en la remerciant bien de sa bonne pensée,—et d'ailleurs, je crois, le transport de lettres est défendu à la douane. Je suis contente que la petite amie ne boude plus (bouder c'est bien français !) et que my lord va mieux ces jours-çi. 'Fouler' est un peu votre 'sprain,' mais familier, et s'il s'agit de votre papa, inexacte. Fils de scientifique, vous choisiriez plutôt l'exacte expression. Dîtes alors pour lui le grand mot Blessé, c'est largement mérité, et celà vous plaira, je pense. Bon voyage, Monsieur, que ma Paris bien-aimée soit bonne pour vous.

Votre bien dévouée.

SOPHIE.

PART III.—THE MEETING-GROUND.

PART III.—THE MEETING-GROUND.

Francis was wounded for the second time towards the close of 1915.

That was a difficult winter, that finished for France in the long agony of Verdun. Spirits were sinking, prices rising, fractiousness and recrimination the order of the day. Even our British Tapleyism, justly celebrated, was hard put to it to find comic relief. French realism made no effort to do so. The weather opened cold in January, then relaxed and took in turn to every sort of hysteria, as though encouraging humanity to do the like. Storms from every quarter of the compass shook the seas, seething already with the hellish inventions of man. Various blizzards adorned the month of February, and a record gale of wind devastated the English midlands in March. More and more irritably, all that season long, France questioned English proceedings, and critical Paris especially. But the satire she shot was occasional, absent almost, for the preservation of her own proud attitude absorbed her quite. The blight, the leprosy still clung to her, strong rooted; she whose only pride was to be perfect, stood defiled in the world's eye, with the very gesture of loathing, pushing it away. How could she really have time for us, whose own time was limited? Her partners were but her tools, means to her end for the time being. France rested not, spared not, spoke not which was most wonderful; she husbanded

and herded, such as was left her, her eyes upon the clock.

So I have gathered from du Frettay's conversation since the epoch; and it was out of this self-same rigour of public affairs, that Corporal Blakie's private troubles arose. They had for some time back been accumulating, but I only realised them when he reached England, and the surgeons set him free. Francis had been rather badly treated, this time, by fate and the faculty, so he was allowed an interval. He was too modest to talk of his sufferings: or possibly, being wounded below the waist-line, too polite. I doubt if I should ever have gathered what was wrong from his own accounts, and the doctor was tactiturn: so I left the hospital, and had a belated Christmas dinner with Janet,—who immediately told me. She had been deluged with exact information, in overwhelming terminology, at every stage of Francis's inner history, by Sophie.

It was from the Duchess, too, that I learnt the facts about Linda. Linda was scheming, at Francis's discharge, to have him down to her cottage convalescent home in Surrey. This struck me as an excellent idea, as also Janet: but the subject himself was less certain, I found. Francis, better in body, was suffering from what Sophie and her like called the 'cafard,' after weeks of hospital.

'It is as you think,' said Francis, depressed. 'I'd as soon stay in London if you would have me. I don't suppose it will be for long.'

'Or at Holmer,' I said to cheer him. I should mention that, barring an uncle at Newmarket, he was a man without belongings or appendages: which was probably why his nurses liked him so

'I dare say they would have me at Holmer,' said Francis shyly. 'But somehow, until I marry her, I'd rather not. It is not quite—natural.'

It was not: it was disgracefully out of nature. I leant nearer.

'My dear man, why do you not marry her? Why have you not been married, all this time?'

'We settled not,' said Francis, still looking away. 'It would have lost her her place, and it seemed her parents did not want that. It's a good one.'

'Of course it's good,' I echoed feebly.

'And Sophie, she's French. That is, she's bound up to her parents, though her father's not easy. And he doesn't care for the English,' he added, lowering his tone a little. 'I've an idea, he doesn't care specially for me. That is, the idea of me. He has not seen me, of course.'

'How could he not care for the idea of you?' I argued.

Francis smiled, tolerant. 'That's you, sir. Just look at me. I had a good place, but you observe I've lost it. I've only corporal's pay at present; and though what she calls the location is larger than what a corporal's wife would get in France, it would not touch what her Grace gives her, not from the parents' point of view. Added to that, times are hard—getting harder—and they would have to give up her "dot."'

'You are "calé," Francis,' I retorted. 'If you talk French, I shall. I can do it as well as Jamesie.'

Francis smiled again, and more freely, glancing at the letters that lay by him. We had all learnt by this time, be it remarked, that he was the person to apply to, for facts about the Suirs, for the reason that Jamesie favoured him peculiarly. Bess was never any good, on the subject

of her own affairs; she was really an annoying correspondent; but hardly a detail of domestic life came amiss to Jamesie, once he had found the right man to apply them to. And was not Francis, who had lately tended and adorned my modest hearth, under the eyes of Jamesie taking tea, most evidently that person? Thus we now applied to Francis, as to our young friends' foreign circumstances.

'They have met the brother, I think,' said Francis, alluding to Bess and Jamesie, whose letters lay uppermost in the sheaf he was fingering. He had drawn some very nice ones this time,—even Shere had sent him a message, by Linda. His was a double event; to get a Corporal's stripe, and then be bowled over for the second time, even in this eventful generation, calls for commentary. 'But not the old people,—they live a bit outside the town. Sèvres would correspond to Kew or Hampton Court I dare say. Not but what Lady Iveagh would go over, if I specially asked: but I see no point in putting her out. Sophie seemed to expect it of her——'

'Did she indeed?'

'Yes, sir. It would have been Sophie's idea of the nice thing for Lady Iveagh to do.' A touch of London humour showed for the moment. 'I didn't argue the point. I put it Sophie's own way, saying her Ladyship would have enough, living in a small way as Mr. Jamesie speaks of, and the afternoons in the hospital, and Mr. Jamesie's self who is not to be forgotten,—not to mention her husband taking to flying just when she thought she had him safe. . . . Altogether, I just put it to Sophie as I told you,—there was no point in her Ladyship's putting herself out.'

'And did Sophie accept the judgment?'

‘I can’t say, sir. I told her by letter, as usual. I can only hope she takes what I say in that fashion right.’

I turned it over. ‘And what about her letters?’ I queried. ‘Is her English improving?’

‘Not the least,’ said Francis, gathering severity. ‘She is convinced she speaks English to a fault, sir. And yet she constantly says I misread her, and what she meant to say was as plain as plain. It isn’t, sir, not always. And so—so we waste time.’

I thought about it anew. It was hard luck on them, undoubtedly; it was the common, cruel luck. True, at the best of times, this pair had had to trust to correspondence largely; but it was different. With our minds at Peace, even simple lovers of two nations can find pen-room for their passion,—witness the earlier letters of this collection; apart from the fact that when the Wickfords were in London, little safety-valve meetings, walks and whatnot, continually occurred. Peace simplifies, and straightens. War complicates, and crumples up. ‘It is the nature of War to widen, not to approximate.’ Ay,—but not enemies only. It widens friends, it widens allies,—lovers themselves are not secure from it. It puts its cursed disintegrating touch on all.

‘It comes right when you are together,’ I prompted, in the direction of Francis, who had his face on his bent elbow. (He was lying full-dressed on his hospital bed.) He nodded.

‘And down in the country,’ I insinuated, ‘she could come to see you any time. I should be surprised if such things as visiting hours existed, with Mrs. Monk on the committee. You remember what her idea of rules at cricket were.’ Francis did. ‘I might motor Sophie

down, for instance, on Sunday. Does she like the country ?'

'She knows nothing about it, sir,' said Francis, lifting a weary face, and seeking severity where he could not find it. He wanted to be severe on Sophie, because he was wearying after her: her pretty freshness, her French fastidiousness, her absurd didactic airs of impotent youth. He, with all knowledge now garnered of the world's evil, did not at all want Sophie to know things:—so he elaborated.

'It's as much as she knows, if she knows a robin. She's afraid of horses, and openly,—she has fits of course at cows. She regarded Sybil at Holmer as a montrosity,—you remember Sybil? The one with the red neck that placed them all to leg.'

Did I not remember Sybil? Gosh! I said I recollected her.

'She's doing two men's work on the farm now, Pelham told me,' said Francis. '*She* works for her country all right,—twelve hours daily, from five to five. How's that, sir?'

'Not out,' I admitted. He ceased for a moment, admiring the point: noticing it, no doubt, to repeat to Pelham. I had the full gaze of his nice clear eyes, with the shock behind them, which is to be seen now in so many of our soldiers' faces. Of course, in spite of the little European casualty intervening, Francis remembered the cricket-scores as well as I did.

'Well, she wasn't?' He pondered the great truth I had stated. 'His lordship all but fetched her once, it was a wily ball. Me she beat, completely. Com-pletely. . . . Well, to resume, sir, Sophie, she runs from Sybil's cows, and makes fun of her complexion,

but she takes to her cream very kindly. She isn't any thinner than when I saw her last.' Evidently, there was a reproach conveyed; he was driving home the comparison with Sybil's twelve-hour's day.

'I hope she is not otherwise,' I said.

'She's about what she was, sir,' said Francis, in a colourless manner, concealing an unreasonable pride in Sophie, past and present. 'Whereas the Duchess, she's as thin as you would expect, trailing round to her sales and soldiers' clubs and Belgians. There you are again.'

'Belgians?'' I asked.

'That's it. Her Grace gives Sophie some bits of work with the Belgians, which to a girl having the language you would say would be simple. But no,—she despises them.'

'Never,' I said.

'Yes, sir: contempt it is. I put it to her. I said, your equality is only inside your own country then, I said. There's none of necessity with outside nations. I couldn't help just that. I happened to remember Lady Iveagh with her arms full of those dirty little Belgian babies, like one of those statues of Charity——'

'Hospitality,' I corrected quickly: because I did remember Bess.

'That's right, sir.' Francis welcomed the substitute. 'I used charity, but I have an objection to the term. And so would those Belgians object, and rightly, after their doings in our favour. . . . However, there you are. No altering by argument Sophie's national view of them, as being like herself, but different. And as getting a trifle too much attention in England,' added Francis,

London humour appearing again, 'while the claims of her own army is left out.'

'These girls and their ignorance,' I moralised finally, when he had dilated a little more on Sophie's general short-comings. 'Strikes me I shall have a lot to teach her, when I take her to the country.'

'You, sir?'

'As I mentioned. I shall quite enjoy that drive, going down.'

'All right,' said Francis after an interval.

After that, we discussed my own prospects in the Army. Francis thinks about as much of my turn for military service as he did for my cricketing capacity. However, he is kind to me. He gives me hints.

Francis to Sophie.

DEAR SOPHIE,

We have a very nice little place here, and it is reached more easily than I supposed from London. Care in excess fit to amuse you if I disclosed it, there was even a lady (Miss Laura) sent up to fetch us down. Now I am able to walk, and even ask for a ticket, little though they may think it, and my mate, (that is Furniss I introduced you) a dab with his crutches knocking me on my feet. However, indulgence is the order of the day, and I'm not denying a rest with some green to look at was grateful, and I slept after that little outing better than I have for some time back. It's odd how its the nights bother you being then it all comes back I suppose, and you cant get level with the alteration. Its this changing to and fro, however easy managed, trench-work to hospital-drill, for all they say it is confusing,

same as two lives might be, undigested. Now for fear of writing too stiff for you I will mention little facts. For instance these sheets are better than the London sheets, needlework on the pillows such as even you would not sniff at. And I have flowers, hot-house, that is Mrs. Monk. I now hear her husband is something in the City. And what you had best not tell others our butter is Butter and our milk is Milk, not concentrated. Miss Joyce in her White looks well, and seems spirited. She is less regular than the other ladies, which makes her liked because looked for. Chances are with so much to occupy her she will live that sorrow down.

Now goodnight darling, this is out of orders which is the other orders following me. Here there are none specially.

Yours ever,
F. B.

Sophie to Francis.

Mon cœur, I am happy to know you are arrived and shall see you Sunday without fault so wait me. How did that Furniss knock you on your feet it was negligent extremely when you can hardly stand. My dear, speak not of nights to me, now the Duchesse and I reach* one another the papers, with the news of France. Yet hers are officers protected, their sectors little exposed or near the trouble region. Only her M. Ronald approaches possibly, while mine much more, and further east it is Enfer unendurable. More in every letter it is feared now they must give. It says openly in Paris. How can they hold, alone, unhelped, those multitudes against them? Why do you not aid, you rich, you easy,

* S'arracher.

the dozens I see each day here drinking in the London streets. No, I cannot understand it, do not speak to me ! Ours they die like flies, in all senses I hear misfortune. Well then, I impatient, I go there, I devote myself for the brave blessés of France. There is none but that for a woman, it is the right, the convenable, the Duchesse and my father must accord.

Écoute, chéri, I have now made three nœuds of tulle for the Duchesse, a thoughtful operation. And thinking I decided this. I ask the enormous Grace that I make on her stove on Saturday a consommé de légumes, the only thing that is right for your condition. I fill this in a closed pot I saw in that cow-woman's dairy. I cover it with a napperon from my own corbeille. It is cleaner for you than that nasty beef, which is all the English think of. I shall present my soupe, before all your ladies, with persistance. You are to me. Bon ! As for the costume of infirmière, as worn by such as pink Miss Pennants it is desecration. I forget which is Miss Joyce*, but all are equal, loud and pink. A fine French face for the veil alone is indicated, necessary. Bon ! All this I considered to the end, while I arranged the Duchesse's nœuds.

Repose-toi bien, mon petit, à bientôt,

SOPHIE.

Madeleine Pennant to Linda Monk.

DEAR LINDA,

I went to tea with the children again, Lady Iveagh very kindly asked me, guessing perhaps I might be lonely, since Trixie has gone east. Not but what the ambulance-girls are decent, and Jeannette meets me as

often as she can for lunch. However, that is not the point of the moment, which is a message from Jamesie. He was frightfully interested to hear the names of those two men you were getting down. He knows both as usual,—I never knew such a child. It seems the corporal is the same man that knocked us all into fits on the Holmer cricket-field. It struck me as rather a weird chance, unless you knew already. Or perhaps Joyce did? Anyhow to make all safe Jamesie composed this for you. It is not a proper letter,—I think its name is a Public Note. He told me he only knew you a little, and you might 'easully' have forgotten him. Hence of course the formality. He is more killing than ever, now he is half or a quarter Frenchified. I don't know which is sweetest, his little Irish accent in English,—just like his father's,—or his English kind of downrightness in French. And the way he bears with the rather intense little French girl, taking her in while she talks, and then managing her with a word or two,—just brilliant. He has about the only mother in the world who would not be in open hysterics about him. She isn't, she just listens, never smiling, or only at the right things. It is the only way of course with a clever kid, but in her case heroic. I told her so. He is so original, don't you know. He really has all sorts of ideas, on his own, of how things ought to be. You should have seen how he looked at the car, and then at me explaining it. I can't describe the manner,—it's princely. I feel it in his father too, but nobody else I ever mentioned it to seems to agree with me, so I keep it dark. Don't tell Joyce anyhow.

Yours ever,
M. M. P.

Jamesie to the same.

MRS. MONK.

MADAME,

This is only to say that 26134 —th Battalion — Staffs T. F. Corporal F. Blakie happens to be the Man called Francis who made the Enormous Score for us (against you) at the Holmer Cricket Afternoon, June (I have forgotten) 1914 A.D. He belonged to Mr. Herbert at that time, now to K. of K. under H. M. King G. Thinking it might interest you all to know this Ladies.

I am with Salute,

J. C. SUIR,

(Paris, France.)

Francis to Herbert.

Did you know Miss Joyce does play really beautiful? I should not like to say what we all thought of it when she began. We did not want her to stop, but did not know how to tell her so, for she was playing to quite a few of us, if you understand me, on a piano in the parlour which the Chaplain sent in. I think she was afraid of boring us, for she went off to other things, songs and so on, which most of us knew rather to completion,* as one may say. She had said she would not play us German music (not that we should have known the difference) so it was Beethoven who wasn't exactly German she said she played. I am not sure if I spell his name right but you will have heard of him probably. I seemed to have heard something of it once on a gramophone, can't say not being much accustomed, wouldn't like to be sure. But it did you good more than pints of medicine, that it

* Repletion.

did, and other men who were with me said the same. It is a great gift, isn't it, sir? Furniss said she must be a professional, playing like that. One of us, almost a kid he is, cried, but he is pretty shaky after a third operation on his eye, so he can't stand much. . . . What I thought was this. If you would tell Furniss and I some things by name to ask for in the Beethoven style, we might catch Miss Joyce again that way. If we just go asking for music at large, chances are she will play those songs. . . .

[I hastily turned over my musical acquaintance, on receipt of this rather exceptional request, and sent the letter on to Iveagh, who had knowledge at least reaching beyond gramophones. Iveagh, who had by this time picked up an air-pilot's qualifications, to gratify du Frettag, and was working, by no means so picturesquely, on his friend's lines, temporised as usual; but he was sufficiently amused by Francis, it eventually proved, to undertake his education. This he did by way of Laura Pennant, who was musical, though in a quieter way than Joyce, and with whom, in ancient and easy days, before he had a wife or a war to disturb him, Iveagh had been to concerts irregularly. 'Get your sister to play this, not mentioning me,' he directed Laura, 'and I will tell everyone, by Blakie's manner of swallowing it, just how Blakie is.'

Laura also enjoyed herself. She applied the test via Joyce, and reported results to the R.F.C. in France. Francis had thought the Grieg Lyric Fragment 'taking,' had listened politely to the Freischütz Overture, and had stammered in inexpressive ecstasy over the Pilgrim's Chorus. Iveagh and Laura agreed that he was pretty bad, and proceeded to lay fresh snares for him in great contentment. Iveagh had rather forgotten Laura, but she came back to him. She had, unlike Joyce, a nice feminine handwriting,]

Iveagh, to Laura.

My good girl, that was not the way to have him. Of course he liked anything the first time he heard piano and fiddle too. You were just a pretty extra, and the way your fingers fooled about in the show-piece amused him. You ought to have hoofed Joyce, that time, and played him some common tune, Irish for choice, which would have proved what his sense of shape was good for. Chances are he has none, and it is only the more yearning chords and catchy rhythms get him, and of course seeing the nice way she and you agree about it (for once in your lives) sitting above him in your best clothes. . . .

Janet, to Joyce.

Just a line, with Mother's love,—I have her here at Holmer. She wished me to tell you particularly she is so delighted to hear you have taken to music again. She hankered often, she says, to hear you play while you were with her in the spring, but she so perfectly understood your feeling against it at that time, even though it might have given you relief. You will come and play to Mother one day, won't you, before she leaves me, she does want to see you so? Come before you practise yourself back into the austere regions of professionalism, where nothing is ever to be found for domestic use. She loves it. It would be good for Kells to listen too, he is just beginning. Her love to you—

Yours affectly.,
J. W.

I did tell Linda, did I not, that her nice Corporal is engaged to my most particular maid? Please be kind to him!

The same, to the Duke.

DARLING,

I wish I had not such an odiously suspicious mind. It is partly Mother here, making me writhe, poor dear, by the way she talks of Joyce. And here is Joyce simultaneously surrounding those poor convalescent boys (Blakie one) with a circle of siren fascination (you remember Uncle Lionel called her a siren) in the form of soft music after high tea! Well, you *remember* what a dangerous moment, even if one has returned from no wars worse than football! Blakie powerfully impressed—he said in his last she looked like a spirit in white—and Sophie jumpy, who wonders! I have given J. what might be called a strong lead, I hope not too flagrant,—with Mother's innocent assistance. It is funny, but it aches: because it tugs at the roots of Steenie.

Yours,

J.

The Duke, to Janet.

You had better call off Iveagh, he is in it, encouraging Laura, and I am not sure John Ingestre is not too. Disgustin' behaviour in married men, but exactly like these musical philanderers. . . .

Linda, to Shere.

I am much too sick of the world to write, and only send this so that when you next feel pennish you will know I asked. I am sure I only wish I had Joyce's joie de vivre, that girl is extraordinary. She is plunging now, hard all, into an international incident, over that rather stupid good man Blakie, who has been engaged this long while, as I told her, to Janet Wickford's French maid.

It is a silly business, and the man I always thought, though decent-looking, a dunce. It surprised me rather you remembered him. Herbert does naturally, and he seems somehow tacked on to the Iveagh Suirs as well. You should see the Parisian post he has, nowadays. I always wondered if that girl* was a flirt at bottom. I never caught her out yet, nor did Joyce, but here she is corresponding regularly with a ranker behind her husband's back: and goodness knows what may not have happened in his absence heretofor. Herbert, of course, being a man no woman would look at twice (trust Iveagh) is as innocent as a babe. He would never dream of such a combination as conceivable, however attractive the man.† Of course he is half in love with her himself, but not in any style to feel the pang of jealousy. Oh, I am so sick of things, I wish you would write me, I am utterly wretched here. Why can't I fight, I'd give anything to, I'd not do it worse than Herbert. If only I could lose my head, be jealous, anything,—but I can't get up a spurt now, even about my Redfern frock. What's the use,—beasts,—none of you here to look at me. Nothing but gaping Tommies and that——[*Shere tore off the rest.*]

Tim Geoghan to Francis: what may be called the other side.

What do you want turning Corporal for, as well as the Medal? That will give me the deuce's own disturbance getting up to you, when I was certain this fine while I was safe ahead. I am sorry for you being out of it now, for things are merrier. [Censor.] I hear you are

* Bess.

† Oh, didn't I, Linda?

vexed about the gerl I could have promised you, the mistake is ever to get tied to one of them, as I told his lordship lately.* Could you not guess the pair of you this would be the high time of all existence, for the free easy man with not one of them at his tails? And yet any of them in your arms at a wink O it is yourselves I am sorry for indeed and him marrid equally. . . . I had a letter from himself recently and he flying about at the moment or perhaps closely before writing to me. It was a good letter and an intumate. That flying is a great thing and a good idea he had to change, for he takes the horses too hard, it is a difference in us. That was the way he came down on me, as you may remember, so unbridled and unreasoning, for forbaring to overtask myself in the matter of his brother's stable, as he regarded it. But there was the rule behind. Horses and gerls it is the same, you are lost if you take them to heart, so I have asured his lordship, and he crying alone on the sand-dunes beyond at Jerry's demice when a little young boy and none but myself would nottice it. To be sure Jerry was a good small horse and a neat for the jumping but not an Imortal Soul to him, nor few women, and to take both biterly as he will do is a mistake. Pelham will have let you know that Miss F—— as came before Miss Bess for him and a beautiful tricksy bit of. . . .† That little Lady Aileen is a grand child the knowledge of her and the sweetness. It will be a lucky man one day as gets her, sending me her Photograph mounted and gracious, if it were only for having the likes of Her one day I might tack on. . . .

* ?

† Censor (private).

Pelham, to the same.

My boy, I may as well mention S. is getting jealous. Before I go farther it is as well to dot the eyes. It did her no good I may say coming down, those ladies of yours were a trifle too goodlooking. And the misfortune is, down here* one may say they are already known. They all know what Miss Pennants implies, a bit too much in the old days, and consequently such as Green and Masters try to make play with former knowledge, and poke fun at S. which is rash as I take it. I tell them French is French, and Allies or none there are limits. It is just as well her Grace takes her back to London soon, more doing there and less time to gnaw memories as one might say. Everything here reminds her of that evening. How she waited for you, just the place in the Shrubbery, and He came, and You failed her, owing to what? To who, I should say. Well, she guesses. All I need say is, S. is not far out. Now do you take me? It is silly enough. She pointed her questions at me, sharp as a needle, during a walk last night in the garden. Of course I said Miss J. was off her head, visible to all and sundry, about another gentleman; but that, S. argues, would not prevent Miss J. being seen by you. There is no denying either she was visible. S. makes something, with reason, of the dress Miss J. wore that night. Well, I won't go into those ideas of hers on English fashions in the evening, we have had them frequently, and anyhow it is over now. The Duchess wears black, and high, even for the Albert Hall affair with the Royalties: not one of her beautiful gowns since

* Holmer.

that blessed first of August has seen the light. No ornaments nor ermine even, she goes further than some of the Princesses,—Sophie herself told me so. And I myself heard the Duke trying to argue her into the ermine for some show or other, when he was over last. But she is as stiff as a rock internally, though she did not let out her purpose at once. That is woman, that is, she knows those ermines become her, and she can just stand being told so by her husband at some length, though she rejects them finally.

Well, to come back to S., there you are. That Miss J. went far enough, even for the Stage, that night, was obvious to the meanest eye. At a Picture Palace she'd have been censored easily. I could see her old Grace before dinner disapproving, and the Canon, as it were, commenting. And Captain Shere said it was less a Mask than an Unmask, and the Duke said later, in the kind of diplomatic way he has, that all things reckoned with, or reckoned without, his brother had done well not to let his wife be there. This represented my own feeling, as the Duke often does, exactly. He has a very nice judgment where what I may call the qualities of females are concerned. It was more delicate than Capt. Shere's, and quite as fetching for her really. Well, and is it likely Sophie missed? She was extra neat herself that evening to correspond. To be sure she was wrapt up in her own affair too much even to criticise, at the time being, but took note unconscious as women will, and makes use of it now. And I couldn't exactly deny you had an interview with Miss J., when charged, being as how you told me. And Sophie, before the end of the garden-path, with her handkerchief out, pressed to her mouth, both hands clutched in it, the stage-trick

to the life, little idiot ! I informed her she was one, in various ways, but what is the use of it ? You'd best have been married by this, my boy. . . .

Jamesie, to the same.

DEAR CORPORAL F. B. (FRANCIS BLIGHTY)

I am glad she has been, at last. Arent you ? She told us. The letter was to Mother but I saw Sentences where she pointed, and there it was, François, François, simply Millions of times ! That's the Soup they make for the Blessés, Mother says. How didnt it Slop, in the Carriage ? I asked Mother to make us some, then I can be a Grand Blessé at a Poste de Secours, and Denise do Pansements, which she loves, only it Tickles. So I don't let her often, or I kick her sudenly, not to hurt. She knows Tipperary, pretty well, she always goes wrong in the hard place. So I told her to practise, on her Grandmaman's Piano, but she says she has not played since the War. *Well ! !* Still I didn't say anything, though of course been in the same House sometimes you can hear. I wish we had one.* Kells does Music now and French with a new Mademoiselle. Sophie made us Laugf, what she said about her to Mother. She is a Belgian, from Antwerp !

Yours aftly.,

JAMESIE.

P.S.—I forgot to say Madcap came to tea (in Uniform) and took my Note (rather Public) to Linda, in case she had forgotten Corporal who you were.—J. C. S.

* Piano.

Laura Pennant, to Iveagh.

DEAR IVEAGH (May I?)

I am surprised you think we make ourselves smart to play to the soldiers, personally I should not care to at all. Joyce sticks to her uniform, (though I do really think she has too much colour to look well in it), but I wore just anything, since I cycled over from my school, and my hair came down in the Humoreske* as usual. Between ourselves nowadays I feel distinctly out of it, the girls have been so busy since the war, Joyce especially, and I have done simply nothing! Of course I had my teaching, which cannot be neglected just because the Germans are hammering at our front, and what is more, I had to take on an extra bit of music-work the wretched Fräulein left. (By the way, they have *proved* she was a spy, and the girl she especially made up to was some sort of distant connection of Admiral Winkle's,—fancy! Of course now they see the reason of it. It is really a Providence she is a particularly musical girl, and quite uninterested in naval affairs.) To come back to the Hospital, I hope I have done everything you told me. I have nothing specially new to report. It is wonderfully hard to draw anything out of the dear men, though one can see their feeling is as nice as nice. But so terribly *respectful*! The girls they have helping are an interesting gang, resting, most of them, since it is an easy place. There is a doctress belonging who has been in Antwerp and Belgrade and Monastir, all under bombardments, and another frightfully brainy girl who is both nurse and journalist (think of the work of it) smokes like a chimney, and when they cleared her out of

* A violin piece.

Serbia had ever such fun with the Italian officials trying to get back. I forget if she did finally, but she started by boat at midnight several times. She must be a born liar,—by name O'Neill—oh, I beg your pardon! But they are rather imaginative, aren't they? . . . So there I was, with no experience, and nothing to say for myself, as *shy*! Luckily I sat by that nice man Blakie, who really is a dear, he tried so to make me comfortable though of course he is frightfully in request. And another he introduced me, a blind boy, the most pathetic thing! I just confessed to them I was nobody, I had never nursed in Alexandria, nor stuck in Serbia, nor farmed, nor filled shells even,—just the everyday life with the kids. My dear boy, they simply *froze on to me*. Joyce was rabid. . . .

[I feel uncertain, says Herbert, what to say of the above, it is such a monument of Pennantry. From the 'May I?' at the beginning, to the 'shy' at the end it is arrant rubbish: no Pennant was ever shy, and Laura had always called Suir by his first name, having known him as long as Joyce. Possibly Laura did not convey such a clear and cutting impression as her sisters, and that is why she fell back on the feminine pose,—at a distance. I chiefly remember her as bowling furiously at one's ankles, or eye-glasses, or anything vulnerable, the while Madeleine, with equal fury, bowled dead on one's middle stump. Beyond this, I give the word of one experienced, there was not a pin, in physique, to choose between them. However, Suir happened to be 'grouching' (English for 'cafard'), so she fetched him easily.]

Iveagh to Laura.

My dear L., don't you go skidding about the world, you stop at home where the old work is still wanted. It may be middle-class, or perhaps I am getting decrepit

among these asses, but I agree with Blakie. Not that you asked for my ideas.

I have not a word against the Red Cross, nor any man, Lord forbid, but I keep having that idea that where we want women most is in the rear, for the defence. We want them to keep things decent, with the kids above all, and we want you to let us know, by wireless or anyway, from time to time, that the tidy life still exists. Things as they used to be, because we have not improved them. We will not for some time do better than the England of the last volume, the England I used to know. As for my own country I shall become profane by stages if I speak of it, so writing to a nice girl like yourself I desist. People now come to me, or anyhow to Herbert, and say gasping—there were abuses. We were all sitting smiling on the craters of several volcanoes, they say. All I can say is I had sooner that way than as at present on a neat collection of active ones, which are ruining even the decent things there were. It is not as if men (and women, for my mother's generation did wonders) were not giving their life-blood to rectify what was wrong before the crisis. It is not as if craters, when decently treated, all hands to it, need of necessity break out. I have sat myself on several volcanoes without special inconvenience, unless that I might have liked a second pair of breeches to keep out the cold. Make an allegory of that if you see the way, I do not at present. Society may have been decadent a bit in England, and certainly in France: but we were not at the end of our resources, nor likely to be, God knows we are much nearer now. And if it was waking up, however we needed it, I cannot see we have gained much, as a few millions have done lately, by waking up to discover yourself in splinters, or dead.

I may not be writing sense, my brother says I do not always, and my mother says other things about my style and habits that are sadder to know. Also the weather is ghastly, and we are in forgotten kind of quarters a proper pig would protest against. (That last was a nice sentence, aliteration* and so on, take note of it.) I have no time to compose as a fact, I only set out to say that one thing,—keep in front of the kids at all costs, do not let this beastliness or bad feeling touch them if you can help. We will thank you surely, above all such of us as have them† ourselves. None of us could go on for a day if we did not feel that, we are keeping the next lot clear of it, clean of it is the word. If it is fighting for my boy's future I will do it willingly, and fall if required, none readier. But we cannot do what we want even, do you see my argument, unless you girls will fall in and help us behind. . . .

The Duchess, to Lady Iveagh.

BESS DEAR!

We are so sorry to give Iveagh away, but he is having the loveliest musical flirtation with *Laura*, and we do so wish, Sophie and I, that he would turn his attention upon *Joyce*. Could you not get him to? We do not know what to think about her, Sophie and I, and we grow terribly uncomfortable. I assure you I suffer for it, for my tulle butterflies have lost all their character, and my hair-waves seldom settle right, not to mention such a tragic little face in the glass behind me, that I cannot, though I fain would, believe it is only Verdun. It will shortly be a French situation à trois, all complete,

* Sic.

† Children.

if someone nice and Irish does not help us. I am sure he would, if you asked ! A musical flirtation is such a delicately insinuating, attractive thing. And so *saje*, Bess ! Nothing is so safe, it is better even than the literary variety, which often, as you know, gets rather disagreeable at the end. The musical sort is fierce, but friendly: he has only to tell her that Moussorgsky or one of the latest makes him sea-sick: and they will soon be at it, furiously delighted with one another, and Joyce will forget *Francis*. Now do you perceive our deadly anxiety ?

I think, really, it is the poor dear man being weak: weak in body, and disillusioned. It has been an unmentionable ordeal for our nicer men. They went out so kind and hopeful, especially those of the first lot, because of course the first harvest drew all the knightly spirits, the gentle quixotes who in England eternally exist. I know he must be that by what St. John thinks of him: St. John is a person who ought to know.* But my dear, what kind of an awakening has it been for quixotes,—an everlasting awakening from island dreams of romance. I think, often, the moral suffering in simple spirits has been fearful, worse than the physical, their poor minds too have been scorched, and blinded, and gassed. Gassed into apathy, or blinded into bitterness, and, since the British kind is masked and silent, good jolly clergymen like Uncle Lionel are helpless before it, and the most perceptive doctors, like Ashwin, are helpless too. Our men are such babes, oh, they are, Bess ! Trix says the Americans from the West, should we drag them in—which heaven forbid for their sake—are tenderer still. Well, is it any use opening their eyes, by horrors like this ? I suppose your elderly young

* I salute the Duchess.

French friends would say it is. I am inclined to say it is not, because nothing so out of their own life and nature can be possibly right. Consider the ant and the beaver and things of that sort. They each find the environment that is good for them, don't they? Will you kindly extract this thought for me, and illustrate it, and enlighten me? I really have no time in this whirl to think, in terms of ancient reasoning. It is just emotion on emotion, crushing one, till one's brain is a blank. . . . Nurse's sister seems seriously ill, at Salonika. I told Kells, but he is in the Preparatory School condition of kicking at Nurse, and he only looked sulkier. I wish he felt things more,—she is so devoted to him, and he repays her so rarely, though he can be sweet. . . .

Lady Iveagh, to the Duchess.

I will hand on your suggestion about Joyce to Iveagh, but I don't think, somehow, it will work. About poor Nurse, I am sorry, I am writing to her separately. Oh, the bravery of those women,—I mean the Nurse's sisters, but I won't exclude the Holmer Nurses too. She wrote Jamesie the jolliest kind letter only yesterday, with news of everybody, children and animals, just because she discovered that Kells forgot.

About Francis, yes, I grant all that, only I think the trouble comes much more from the other side. Should a thousand Joyces catch him dreaming, or drowsing, or discouraged, they would not alter his fidelity. I shall not speak of this theory to my French friends either, they might call it sentiment or cant, like yours. They call English conviction cant, just now, rather easily, perhaps because we take so long really to be convinced

of things! And when we are they are cross again, because nothing will stir it, even mockery. It is all heavy to them, drowthy, and they are so graceful and light, gliding over what they do believe, for conversational purposes. Of course conscientious objectors could not exist over here: they would all have died long ago of mockery, and been buried appropriately, without any flags.

However it may be, I feel it in my bones, about Francis. I don't know much, Janet, but I do know lovers, and I gave him my hand upon it, long ago. I have always found it hard to believe he was not a Northcountryman. I think with that *-ie* he must be, but let that pass. It is far more likely Sophie would give him what you call the go-by out of pique, or her parents' prodding, which I think by signs in her letters has increased of late. She is terribly inclined to succumb to them to save what she sees as a life-time of worrying, since she cannot see herself shaking free of them once for all. She is under her father's shadow still, and dare not give it up for Francis's, will not trust herself to him. If she ever really had, I am certain he would have swept her away from you and everybody, made her marry him, taken her once for all. Because he would be very, very good at taking, though not mentioning it up to the moment when he leads the assault, if I may judge by that decoration. But she cannot let go of her moorings on this* side,—very natural for so young a girl, in another country, and most of all natural now. The strain† is at its worst now,—I won't enlarge on it, because it is just a fever symptom. I will do what I can, dear. Anyhow I have friends in France. . . .

* French.

† Anglo-French.

The same, to her aunt,—evidently a close confidante, a friend of du Frettay's, and a person of her own way of thinking.

There is no doubt about the Entente under this roof, Ernestine. You can tell anybody who asks you, here it is quite all right.

I forgot if I explained the full origins of our coming here? G.* may have done so, or (still more likely) you may have guessed. Our little flat, on the fourth floor of the house at Passy where his mother lives 'au premier,' was taken and furnished, five years since, by her for her son's ménage. He and his wife lived in it, as you know, for eighteen months, then it was over, together with all his mother's hopes for them. Madame du F. kept the flat on though, just as it was, for him to work in, when he wished to be quiet,—all his papers and mechanical plans are here. (You remember how neat he always was at Hatchways,—it makes me ashamed of Iveagh on top of him!) When he was mobilised, of course, it fell free again, and she offered it, as soon as we came to Paris, to us.

Well, that is the background of my story. She has been worrying cruelly about G. who has missed a letter,—she has had nothing at all from him for five days. Janet or I can bear that at need,—this French mother cannot possibly. Since he first went off he has never failed to write every other day, except when 'en permission,' which is to say under her eyes. Picture her feelings then,—and who dares say without foundation? Gabriel is what they call an 'ace' here, a great adventurer of the air, always just on the hither side of recklessness, and he is in one of the eastern 'secteurs' at present, where there

* du Frettay.

is scope enough for such. Well, she wired to Iveagh at once when the post brought her nothing, and he wired back, I am sure as promptly as he could, but he had no help for her. She wired to G.'s headquarters,—no answer. Perhaps chiefs are bored with mothers, I can't say. I was down with her all yesterday afternoon trying to comfort her, to think of reasons, the weather, anything,—but nothing did her any good. She told me, sitting like a Fate, that he was dead, that she had known he would be, that all the others were,—all the others ! So ghosts gathered thick about me, in the dull snowy light, through the French veiled windows,—you know how they muffle everything in their rooms. My tongue clove in very despair of fighting them, young ghosts, so many, so dear,—and why not ours ?

Late in the evening, mine came back. Suddenly,—he had the night,—he had been in Paris all day. I did not ask about it, I never do. He came up, quick and soft, past her door: not daring to go in to her, since he had nothing. He guessed from her telegram what her torture must be. I dared not go either, it was so late, after nine: and I did not *want* to, Ernestine. We talked in whispers, not to wake Jamesie: we never expected her to come. Besides all her feelings about the flat I mentioned, the stair-flights bother her. Still, she has the key of course: and I suppose we missed the click of the outer door.

His wretched knee was aching, having been standing about all day at the Ministry. I was rubbing it, most domestic, indecorous, everything,—he was sitting in Gabriel's chair. I had not thought what it would be for her, should she come, because I would not think of her or anybody. I just wanted to be happy at all costs,

and shut out others' tiresome suffering. That is how we are getting now. . . . Only I couldn't, quite. Perhaps because my boy was pale, resting above me, letting me play with him, as he calls it, looking at me, yes,—but not thinking about me enormously. I knew he was not. I tried to pull his thoughts away from G. by any means, the usual. . . . Then she came.

I believe it was telepathy, the thing never quite out of nature. He just turned his head,—you could see the flash pass between them. You know she has been jealous of him often, which made it more wonderful. I had him tight by the leg, he could not move to meet her, an old, dignified French lady,—I never behaved so shockingly in my life. She took his head so sweetly, and kissed him, and said—'That is right, my dear, let her look after you,'—as if he had been G.,—and she pretended she had come to look at Jamesie, and went on, leaving us there.

Trespassers on her hearth, her sacred places,—you know what it is to a French mind,—Iveagh cried. . . . It is the *whole* agony comes home to you at such moments. Multiply that on her face by a million, by two million, awful! And *useless*, that is the curse. Because this morning both letters have come, one after the other, and it was nothing but an upset of the courier, owing to the storm. Everybody's mothers had been tortured, Ernestine, owing to a little weather, that is war. And everybody's wives. While I—

Francis, to Herbert.

Can you tell me why Sophie has stopped writing, for more than a week now, nearly ten days? It's not her brother, is it? Because I do hear the losses are heavy

for all the *Daily Mail* rather gives the other side. I hope it is not missing,* that would do for her. Excuse shortness, they have rather stopped me off.

Herbert to Sophie.

[*Abominably rash, but I was anxious.*]

How dare you stop writing to Francis ?

Nurse to Lady Iveagh.

I got a talk with Sophie as you suggested, and tried, having been primed by Pelham, to discover what was wrong. She used to trust me considerably at one time, but lately, one thing and another, she has rather drawn away. She seems to suspect everybody, though I am sure I can answer for Pelham and others, they have tried to be kind to her. It is the papers partly. She cannot stand the way they patronise and show off her army, as though this time of trial was a pretty play. I agree with her, some of the papers seem less than serious, considering the number of people in the deeps, as it were, who are bound to read. For we can none of us keep off them, even if we dislike the taste† as many do, and I suppose they profit by it. . . . Well, the girl was stiff with me, and seemed offended with Mr. Herbert sorely. She classed it as English rude of course, forgetting however a gentleman he might have his feelings too. Sometimes I think they are much stiffer about classes really, than we are, at any rate have it more on their minds: she will not believe it could be, in Mr. Herbert's case, the feeling

* Posted 'Missing.'

† Which sense ?

almost of a friend.* I said Mr. Herbert would have written that exactly if Lady Meg or Miss Laura say had been in question: and had he thought of S. for one moment as servant, he would have been more round-about and polite. But no, she will only take it as a direct offence and set-down directed to herself. . . . I read it chiefly as a kind of national soreness, varied by jealousy of Miss Joyce as to the fore in Blakie's letters, more than anything against Blakie personally. Jealous is jealous, no doing much to it, yet I may have served for something. She knows about Maggy having taken this fever nursing a French officer: which may account for her taking me as well as she did. . . .

Lady Iveagh to Nurse : extracts from two letters.

I am so sorry about Maggy. Did you know Miss Beatrix was out there? Her sister whom I told is cabling to her to send you news. If it is outside the town a little, Trix has a car, and need never think twice about telegraphing expenses; and she is so kind. . . . Thank you, that was exactly my own feeling about Sophie. A little jealousy, and a national soreness: she is punishing him for others, I do not believe in the heart of her she doubts him at all. It was extremely kind of you to make the effort,—I hope you did not go up to London on purpose for that? But perhaps, as Kells' mother talks of him growing out of all his clothes, it was something much more important! . . . I know what you mean, they do worry a little here about equality, considering that it is the leading Republic, where the

* To Francis. Needless to say, this practised psychologist is right.

rights of man were clearly demonstrated, once for all. I suppose that is it,—knowing themselves a model they get self-conscious, at least among the weaker ones: so that it becomes more ‘I am as good as you,’ than ‘you are as good as I,’ which is so much pleasanter. And anyhow it is a pity to think too much about it. I am sure you always admitted the Duchess was as good as you, Nurse, didn’t you, in the matter of Kells? You have not anything to reproach yourself with. . . . However, the papers do show us at our very worst, certainly. I saw one the other day, by I suppose our greatest living journalist: who managed (very cleverly) to suggest first, that the poor wretched German prisoners, disappointed of the victory promised them, and sick with the slaughter as everybody must have been, were not properly grateful to English womanhood nursing them: and next improved it to English *ladyhood*, as making the case still more shameful! I lit my fire with that newspaper, gladly; and I said while I did it——‘So perish all snobs.’ Jamesie heard me,—he is in bed with a cold.

[These two correspondents are sure of one another’s humour, I should like to remark. It must be the Northern sympathy again. Bess jests in all security, even on the solemn subject of Kells. And I know, first-hand, that the Wickford nurse vastly enjoyed her letters.]

Miss Kitchin to the Duke.

Would it be too inopportune if I begged your Grace to have an auditor, professional or otherwise, to check the books of my Funds? It seems her Grace* has

* The elder.

found a considerable deficit at her end, and it is hard in the present congestion of trade and traffic from my end to check the error. Not that her Grace accuses me at the worst of anything more serious than carelessness, and it might be so, though I have done my best. But even so you will understand that neither do I want to fall foul of the tradesmen, overtaxed as they all are, unless quite necessary; nor should I like, if doubts there are of my full competence and conscientiousness in this important work, such doubts to remain nebulous for an instant. I had sooner resign my post complete, however regretful to sunder the last link of my old connection with your Grace's household. Yet it must come some time, and nothing would pain me more than that such separation should be forced or under a veil. . . .

The Duke, to Iveagh, enclosing the above.

Will you see to this? It is Mother teasing the poor old cat probably, the customary thing. I suppose by a forced separation she means being scruffed, and no doubt that is what Mother is trying for. But I had sooner not, if it is all the same to Mother, since she still does a piece of my business, decently. Let her know that I have always been contented with her, which is a fact, and would need something stronger than Mother's word for it to believe she was cheating Mother, still less the hospital funds. Have an auditor, or whatever you like, anyhow take it off me, there's a nice little lad. . . .

Iveagh, to the Duke.

Oh bother you, just when I had a little peace. I don't like booting a cat-fight any more than you, more especially when I have got a game knee. Besides I thought the idea was I should make war for the time being. Is there no getting rid of them* in this world anyhow? That one always made my heart sink, to look at her disadvantages, though dishonest is not one of them. I suppose I will do it, some time. I will ask you to pay my journey and my dinner, not to mention divert B.'s loving attention off me,† if I have to go to Boulogne. . . . Look here, would you like to answer this in exchange, because I am resisting the seduction. If you do not see your way to, tear it up, I trust you. Anyhow do not let the women know.

[The letter enclosed was from Joyce.]

The Duke to Iveagh,—postcard.

Have you any more of that sort?

Iveagh to the Duke.

I might have. Be easy, I'll not die of it. She has a down on me, you may remember, and each time she feels the symptoms of a fresh one, she remembers me again. I think it is some law of nature, but which I would not like to tell you. My own tidy woman has not feelings of that kind in her,—has yours?

* Women.

† Question of leave, probably.

Joyce, to Iveagh.

[This letter I have censored myself.—S. H.]

I am surprised you have not written me on the theme your family is raving about, but perhaps you are acting this time through your wife. Linda, who notices writings (having had a good deal of dodging of the sort with Reginald* to do), told me she had hardly missed a day with F. B., who really does not particularly want her intervention. However, if, as I think, it is still you who are the invisible controller of my destiny, you had better drop it, because it is now too late. You would not stop my marrying him if I chose to, nor snubbing him if I chose to, and he is rather a bore. Even now he is following me, and leaving flowers on the key-board, and he might bore me to extinction later on, worse than Linda's. It's only the splash it would make among all you infernal nice people would amuse me to witness. I can see Janet's mother . . . with her face drawn to her boots, and your wife being kind to us . . . and the Frenchwoman sharpening a razor, and you cutting me—cutting me, wouldn't you? Rank lot of snobs and shirkers. . . . We played the Kreutzer last night, beastly Boche rubbish it is; and first and last I knocked Laura out, did not allow them to hear her. I heard Carreño† play that trick once on quite a swell violinist, man of course, it was lordly. Then and there I swore, when I next had the chance, to do it myself. For the moment all the decent-looking artists are fighting so I can't. It seems rather hard to sacrifice a sentimental little drab like Laura—what do you think?—however

* Monk.

† Teresa.

I decided to. . . . It was nice in the garden afterwards, the sweets of victory. I let him have my hand, no more,—Bess's principles could stand that, couldn't they?—and Linda's. Oh, Linda's loftiness really makes me die, when I remember what lies behind it. How I hate her. . . . That is how it is going to be now, a heave and shudder through half a dozen households, as soon as you let a man take your hand. You are getting so precious, my dears. For such of you as manage to save your lives (I speak with confidence) it will be worth it. Won't it? Are you still observing,—spying that is? When are you next coming home?

The Duke to the Duchess,—pensive.

I think you can be easy in the long run about Blakie. He is standing out against Joyce at her best, combined with the Kreutzer sonata which must be hard on him, and driving the girl so frantic by passive resistance that she would even have my brother now if he asked her. Don't tell. The trouble is that he is not on, not after Ireland, it is a pity for her. . . . I am not so sure the war being good for her infirmity. It would be more the contrary, since she has the brains to argue it, in spite of all. I always said there was a lot in her. . . . If Iveagh were on the loose I am not at all sure I would not send him to marry and make what he calls a tidy woman of her, during his next leave. Or you might send him, he would obey a whistle of you. Did it ever strike you how obedient he is to us, all things considered,—I mean, granted he was a rank rebel in infancy? Just at times it comes home to me, remembering; I must have trained him very nicely. He has taken Mother off me in this

matter of the accounts with only a little curse or two, though he cannot like it. I had nightmares about that, before I thought of him. I shall be sorry when the war is over and he returns to his tropical parasites again, for I would as soon keep a parasite of his sort blood-sucking upon me, and that is the fact. . . .

The Duchess to the Duke,—pert.

. . . You sound so disgustingly languid in your last,—a kind of Turk with a hookah (corpulent)—that I have a very good mind to whistle Iveagh off Mother and Miss Kitchin,—and where would you be then? . . .

Madame du Frettay, to Madame Colmar.

MADAME,

I write on the part of a young Englishwoman of my acquaintance, Lady Suir. She, as I gather, is interested in the young man fiancé to Mademoiselle your daughter, who is of the household of her belle-sœur in London. Lady Suir is afflicted, it appears, by the strain that has produced itself in their relations, and asks herself its origin, since your amiable daughter had for this young man an affection appearing to all her surroundings truly sincere. I was greatly indisposed, as you will understand, to meddle in the affairs of others, especially in a matter so remote from my own pre-occupations of the *foyer*, in which each of us at the present hour is so painfully bound up. But, Madame, arrives the claim of friendship! This young Lady is truly distressed. It seems she knew the young man, as it were, personally, enough to realize in him qualities out of the common run, such as to assure your daughter's

satisfaction and even good fortune in her married life. Note that I repeat her: my own counsel I would never venture to advance. You, and only you, are qualified to judge, in the matter of your daughter's happiness. It may be Monsieur her father has for her other plans. My ignorance is perfect of your circumstances: and in writing thus I blindly obey the dictates of friendliness, emanating from her urgency at my side. She works in the hospitals daily, but were it useful, would be happy to visit you at Sèvres.

Be so good as to excuse, Madame, this intrusion of a feminine unknown, and to believe in my most distinguished feelings.

C. DU FRETAY.

Monsieur Colmar, to Madame du Frettay.

MADAME,

Your distinguished attention has greatly honoured us, but alas! what can I say? These matters, with a stranger, however gracious and amiable, are not to be debated. My wife and I, be certain, deplore the entanglement with a foreigner, and *malentendu* resulting, which render our daughter unhappy for the time being, though, as we hope, not lastingly. Sophie is young. She has an excellent position. The young man did well in enlisting, and is exempt, be convinced, from our attack. Yet it is probable he has been spoiled a little by the life of comparative ease and plenty, with *permission à volonté*, which is ordinary, I am told, in the ranks of the British army now resident on our soil. He returns for a slight wound to his native shores, and flirts with his nurse! What would you?—it is nature:

at any ordinary time one smiles. But my girl with her only brother in the anguish of our own front lines cannot forgive him. It is nature, and the nations. And think: should a rupture on a larger scale (which none can contemplate willingly) ever occur, how she will discover the benefit of her painful decision now!

Madame, I beg you to agree to the expression of my most hot-foot* homages.

A. COLMAR.

*Madame du Frettay, to her son, enclosing the above
two letters.*

MON CHÉRI,

Write for the love of heaven to this female, or to the man attached to her, I can no more. Your fine wit will know best how to dispose of his argument, if he has one, my own logic gropes in vain. Are we, by any chance, on the verge of war with the English? I had not noticed it in the newspapers, but nothing would surprise me, and if it were to be truth, one would not see the signs. I am besotted† with cold and calamity, and the thought of you in your insufficient coat. Oh my little one, why wouldst thou not order the superior one of English leather I recommended,—thy chest, I think upon it night and day. . . . Still, answer these wearisome persons if thou hast a moment, because our sweet Bess has it at heart, and that angel‡ in tears almost. He has an inexpressible cult for the man in question, a cult of the cricket-field, perfectly English, especially since it is what any other than Bess would have directed upon her husband, with care. Jamesie regards Iveagh as comrade, rather,—as a comical comrade,—a view dating

* Empressés.

† Abrutie.

‡ Jamesie.

probably from the Irish days. It is varied by an occasional doubt of his temper, if varied at all. It is true, one would not easily exalt Iveagh to the heroic posture,—yet there is thou, had Jamesie wished for an object! Is there not most evidently thou? My beloved, now listen to me. . . .

[Maternal advice of the most intimate and intricate succeeds, such as was going by shoals, through every post, to the horizon-blue heroes on the Verdun field. It was not those mothers' fault if, in the most awful engagement of the war, prolonged under a horror of snow, with the mortally stricken lying out for days and nights under drifts where even the magnificent devotion of a crippled ambulance could not reach them,—those heroes were not completely comfortable.]

Gabriel du Frettay, to his mother.

MY BELOVED MAMMA,

Listen, I have seldom been better, you have no need to fuss.* Can you not remember in the Alps how a few pints of snow never came amiss to me? Our good little rascal† is on the way to getting us out of it, be reassured; and we shall yet see that monkey's beak‡ the laughing-stock of Europe.

In the meantime I am philosopher. I play upon my flageolet de douze sous§ Bess brought me from London. I regret now to have reproached her the reckless expenditure. It showed a just appreciation of what might be needful in the interludes of a National Defence. I spent last evening, which had been otherwise intolerable, in teaching a Saxon prisoner the Marseillaise. I thought,

* T'inquiéter.

† The Kronprinz.

‡ General Pétain.

§ Sixpenny whistle.

how wholesome for that wretched underling of a ruffling autocracy. But sapristi!—the ass knew it already. More, he had always deemed it a German tune. One of his compatriots had used it, it appears, to help out his addled music. What, are they occupying even our airs at present? I am enquiring who the donkey is, that later we may suppress him* The discovery of this rape alone disheartens me, dearest Mother.

A propos, I have seen to your individuals: or rather, I have dealt with their daughter, I am convinced successfully. Put the little problem from you, will you not? And do not speak of the Suirs, I beseech, you drive me wild with irritation. Iveagh sends little notes to me here, which are treasures of expressive unimportance, when readable. His brother, now, worries one: but he, as companion, is adorable; never, since my first dog, have I known a better. Naturally, he was the same to Jamesie, and naturally, Jamesie's gratitude is adequate, being a *gosse* of sense. An imaginative child asks only to be upheld, and uninterrupted. Iveagh has a genius for both. He won his wife, so far as I remember, chiefly by turning his back upon her. It is true his back view is agreeable; still, it would never have occurred to me as a means in itself sufficient, especially with so desirable a girl. *Enfin*—your imperceptive and earthy observations, dearest Mother, have simply made me long for his society. . . .

[We are informed by Bess, notes Herbert on this, that Madame du Frettay was inclined to be jealous of her son's affection for Suir. Between sympathy for his

* Robert Schumann.

mother, and loyalty to his friend, M. du Fretay in daily life was driven to walk a tight-rope: a literary feat which, to judge by specimens like the above, he enjoyed particularly.

[An inter-ally, inter-army exchange on postcards took place about this period.]

Who is Sophie Colmar your people are interested in ? Sacred weather here.—G.

I have not a notion. Try it a little longer next time. The weather is forsaken utterly.—I. S.

Forgive me, I was elbowed at the time. She seems to be attached to her Graciousness your sister-in-law, and affianced to a cricketing-gentleman.

Done it. That would be the pretty girl that caught the Canon out, and none of us able to grin at it. I did not speak to her, as it happened, but Janet has a nice kind about her, you may be sure. The man is a good man, twice wounded. Are you all right ?

How the everlasting ? Twice wounded ? And the hussy plays loose with him ? Sapristi and sacred thunder, I am bored like the deuce. I proceed to write to her.

What is that about writing ? I would not, if I were you. When the man is better, he will explain himself and ease the situation. I am not stirring a finger in it, though the Duchess asked me by Bess to do so. We sit loose, we do not play it. I'll desert if this wind goes on.

The censor missed that. Do not be impatient, mon petit, and do as you are told. Personally, I tell others. Here is my letter to my compatriot, Mademoiselle Colmar. Read, before you expedite to wherever her Grace is at present in residence. It is thus the citoyen addresses the citoyenne, in time of war.

Gabriel du Frettay, to Sophie Colmar.

MADemoisELLE,

You have no idea who I am, but my address is Verdun. Thus I speak to you from an apex no Frenchwoman will regard as inconsiderable, and with a weight—since I may be dead tomorrow—absolutely parental.

Mademoiselle, I venture to place myself upon terms of compatriotism (a word I have invented) and to beseech a hearing. Lady Elizabeth Suir, who is the wife of my dearest friend, has forwarded me a communication from your excellent father, which makes me rage in the obvious though innocent marks it bears of an ignoble propaganda *boche*. There is no bad blood at the present time between us and the English our upholders, on the chance of which he seems to speculate. The thing is not, and could not be, for reasons historical, economical, and sentimental which I have fully explained to him. Fully: I have made a special study of the relations of these countries. Also it delights me to enter so unexpectedly into an exchange of views with so manifestly intelligent a personage. Thus——

Mademoiselle, I implore you (since I may be dead tomorrow) to trust, as I have always done in this matter, the dictates of your heart alone. In a world literally deluged with lies of all sorts, with the Censor's eye staring daily at the agony and love we poor devils send by post, there is no safety but in proximity, and in the hearts that speak. If your affianced is wounded and cannot claim you, go to him instantly. Arriving there, exact the tête-à-tête, though Kitchener himself were present, hold his brave hand, and look in his (probably) unimpassioned eyes. You will know then,

and then only, the truth which, if it is as I think, his letters could in no case conceivably express. And you will have the solace in addition of diddling* the boches, the censor, and Kitchener comprehensively.

Mademoiselle, I am silent, perhaps for ever. Forgive me, hein ?

Your friend and well-wisher,
G. DU FRETAY

Iveagh, to Gabriel.

Well, you know best,—‘ perhaps for ever ’ seems to me a trifle thick. Could you not have added your photograph, and shot a little hole through it with your revolver ? I like the last thing, that is like you. At that point, if I was the girl, I would begin to wonder if I had not been wrong right through. However it may do the trick. I send it to Holmer, an address you might have guessed, if you had not been so vain of it.

I. S.

Jamesie, to Iveagh.

[Occurring somewhere among the last set, goodness knows where, and answered, I will warrant, without precipitation. As usual, being both undated, the pair throw out my calculations.]

DEAR FATHER,

Its postavely *awful*. What do you suppose we ought to do ? You see, Sophie told Nurse she wouldn't Marry him simply, and she didn't esplain at all ! Mothers sure it isn't Aunt Janet. I thought Sophie might have been wanted, sudenly, and so Marriage rather dificult for the Time been, but Mother thinks not.

* Déjouer.

There arent so many Parties since the War. Father I cant think what to tell him if she hasnt. Oh it is a Fix! Mother says better not write to *anybody*, even Nurse, as it is a kind of Secret, particular, belonging to Sophie. But she wouldnt mind your knowing she said.

Your loving
JAMESIE.

Iveagh to Jamesie.

DEAR JIM,

Jolly good for you to draw up a bit, your custom nowadays is to let loose on the world too easily. I give you my word for it, secret sorrow is quite a common thing. Lots of matters don't bear talking of, not only nowadays, there is a censor behind-scenes called Manners will not allow it. Which is as much as to say, mind him and hold on to your tongue, especially where a man and woman are in question.

Having said so much, I may mention that the present shine you tell me about is Moonshine probably. It will all go over before you have licked the halfpenny stamps for next month's correspondence, which will take some time at the present rate of postage, three apiece. You tell me how much money you save while you are resting, —and I will give it you back to buy a wedding-present for Sophie.

In the meantime I have a job for you. You can take this pen to the Avenue de l'Opéra to be mended for me, and you can write a single letter with its assistance, before you send it back.

Yours with love,
I. S.

Lady Iveagh to her husband—dated.

I wish you would not write such things to Jamesie, you are too tiresome. Not that he does not love it, since it comes from you,—he carried it into every corner of the house, like a kitten with its first bone, to think about it in different atmospheres,—but really, it is not on his level at all. Were you ever a real child yourself, and if not, whose fault was it? I am sure it was not Sir James', because he always agrees with me. Jamesie is at this moment writing a letter to him, I think on Irish affairs, with your cured fountain pen. The letter, because of the pen, is public, Iveagh. You see the wonderful influence on Jamesie you allow to *waste*.

Iveagh to Janet, enclosing Gabriel to Sophie.

DEAR DUCHESS,

Do not set me on to Joyce, because I cannot do her. The fact is very simple that she dislikes me, with reason, one being that I frightened her, that night, unnecessarily. I never told Conor I did, because it is a very bad show by our way of thinking. You will guess it is animals I am referring to,—forgive me, Jane.

What I send is something better for the purpose probably. You will have heard of the man from Wickford. He is a man anyone would trust the knowledge of, and the form and so on, and what is more he is her own sort, French. The chances are the girl will take him rightly, but if I were you I would let her look at it alone. When she has done curling you, or whatever it is, I have forgotten. Or rather I never knew, since Bess never

had a maid, except myself, by the same token, once for a week in the Soudan. That was when one of my best-behaved animals* walked out and stung* her. I cured her arm, and I pinned her hair till it was well, but it was a painful incident.

I saw Ronald on Saturday. I do not know what he was doing up this end, but he looked in about tea-time, and I had an interval, so we conversed. He had his pockets stuffed with news-cuttings he had collected for my benefit about Ireland, and I let him read some, because in a fashion it is interesting, one would sooner know. Then I read him Byrne's last from the spot, which was unkind of me. He told me how he was going to take to flying instead of motoring, in order to be well ahead, after the war. I hope he will not be well ahead into the next world, because he has no gift for machinery. How is Arthur?

Yours obediently always

IVEAGH SUIR.

Janet to Iveagh.

Thank you. Sophie took it perfectly, though I own I was a little nervous. Her eyes looked brighter, next morning, and she is wearing the letter from Verdun openly in the front of her frock. I think it may do what you call the trick, the same you did with Joyce—or was it Biscuit?—anyhow with poor dear Miss Kitchin now. Are you given to frightening your female belongings?—because I never noticed it, personally. Of course Bess may have done so, all alone with you and the animals in the Soudan.

* Surely not a horse?

Arthur* is very well, thank you, though daily uglier, but it is such an interesting ugliness. Conor says he is like you, but at present even your Mother protests Arthur may be going to be the wit of the family: he gives me a wink sometimes that suggests more things than he will at present divulge. It was nice of his uncle to ask after him, poor duckling. He had an unlucky entrance into the world.

Which reminds me, Mother (mine), who is still devoted to Joyce, trusts in her last that J. is not going to commit an indiscretion, and throw herself away, so she has got wind of it too. (It is funny how it *matters* what Joyce does, I suppose that is what they call personality, —or is it temperament?) Mother says she is so ‘romantic,’ and explains it to me carefully as a ‘reaction’: I suppose from the strain it was to Joyce screwing herself up to Steenie’s level. Oh dear, mothers! I know I shall be just as bad with Arthur, one of these days.

Jamesie’s French to Sophie is too wonderful,—he reminds me of the clever statesmen’s children of the eighteenth century, the little Pitts and Foxes who grew up to be distinguished men themselves. They managed two languages diplomatically, or three, as our little Royalties of course do now. Only—the difference! You are very fortunate to have him, Iveagh. My children, you see, though very nice, are not entertaining (except Arthur). Jamesie entertains everybody, even Ronald, who is not easily amused. I am glad you saw the old boy. Goodbye, dear, and be careful. I am sorry about that nasty knee.

JANET.

* The youngest Suir.

Dialogue, self and Francis, noted later, but wanted here.

‘ Was it true you took Miss Joyce’s hand ?’

‘ When, sir ?’

‘ One evening, when she and Miss Laura had been playing, rather a long thing.’

‘ Oh yes, sir,—that. The middle tune was a good one, as good as a hymn almost. We’d have encored that for certain, if they hadn’t gone on.’

‘ All right, I’ll tell Miss Laura. Don’t obscure the issues, Francis. Did you ?’

‘ Oh yes, sir, I took her hand. In the garden, you mean.’

‘ That’s it. Politeness, was it ?’

‘ No, sir, by no means. It was that music, I think.’

‘ Gratitude, eh ?’

‘ No, sir, far from it. I was as bad as Miss Joyce, that was all.’ Pause. ‘ I was nearly gone, all but. Only I swore I would not let her know how near I was. Matter of pride, sir. I was sick after it.’

‘ What ?’

‘ Since you asked. Of course, my wound got me low down. And I was pretty sick in the other sense of waiting,—well, some time before that. It was the effect of patience, partly. And there she was,—well, you know what she is. And that music, getting at you unfairly.’ Pause. ‘ I suppose,’ said Francis, very, very gravely, ‘ they took me below the belt. Same as we are doing the Germans, sir.’

‘ What ?’

‘ Sorry,’ said Francis. ‘ That’s not my joke, it’s one of Furniss’s. Matter of the blockade, sir,—the hunger

blockade. Just part of our idle talking. We'd have preferred to keep it an open fight.'

'But Kitchener did not consult you?'

'It wasn't Kitchener, sir. I gather the All-iance does not countenance it.' (*All-iance* and *all-ies*, Francis said.) 'Kitchener had no choice.'

[Self, flabbergasted.] 'I say, may I repeat that joke to Lady Iveagh?'

'Oh, her Ladyship would have heard it,' said Francis, tolerant. 'I told Mr. Jamesie in writing, long ago. He likes a joke.'

'Did he follow it?'

'I shouldn't wonder,' said Francis, contemptuously.

Trix Adler, at the end of a charming letter to Wickford, which he chose to say had nothing to do with me.

. . . and the moral of *that* is, as the Duchess said (not yours), that men and women are not so easily alterable, in or out of War. . . .

[Of course I should have taken the above as motto to my whole collection, if Wickford had not been such a stickler in withholding it. I here and now apologise to Miss Adler for making so little use of her excellent correspondence. It was just bad luck that she was cut off, by her own adventurous spirit, from the main body of actors in my history.]

Janet, on Sunday.

[I have displaced this letter, but it dates itself for the curious. It interested (and amazed) du Fretay, and it was he who obliged me to put it in.]

I have been thinking much of Steenie and pre-war times: dipping in the past, since Mother is here. Dear Mother, she is wonderful,—so young, unused, de-

pendant, in spite of all. For the first time I have taken her, Mother of mothers, into my philosophy.

Think, Bess. Where was the meaning, really, of that convulsion of our times, those bitter battles, bitter feelings, we certainly used to know. Is it over? Must it not arise again? It cannot really have been solved, so easily! The vote?—oh, rubbish! It was never that. We are going to get that, aren't we, for a set of reasons that sound as empty to me as did those with which they refused it us, some time back. There is much, much more in it than Parliament ever speaks of, because it is an infinitely bigger thing. It beats Parliament. It smiles at coalitions against a German enemy, doesn't it? Because the Enemy is always there. . . .

Even in the struggle of our generation, Bess, the Enemy was both sides: exactly as he is in the struggle with the Germans now. Half of us were our own enemies: I do not exempt myself,—nor mother. Lots of our so-called enemy Man were nothing of the sort,—think of the men fate has given us. Now I am going to moralise. . . . Girls like Joyce and company were not in fault, they had the root of the matter, stood the racket bravely. Men like our men were not in fault, they had the root of the matter too. It is by the light of nature, not anything acquired in Parliament (good gracious!) that Conor grants me the right to have, exactly in his measure, no more and no less, my finger on the facts of life. Steenie was in fault,—St. John,—Mother as well. Mother, sweet as she is, has been spoiled at others' expense her whole life long. She is a devoted wife, and she filled her nest with us, to Father's glory, so her business was done, and she sat to be worshipped, a motherly saint. Wick wants to spoil me now, in the same way,

for the same reason, because I have filled his nest. So does Iveagh, horribly: real men are given to it. *But I will not.* To fulfil, and stop, is never a woman's destiny. She must be ready to go under what she has made.

You remember the way Joyce (darling !) used to dilate on the 'kept woman.' Mother is that, I am, you are, Joyce will be. But there are ways of being it. Mother has a little obstinate smile at times (you mentioned it in Mme. du Frettay) which only thoroughly spoiled people wear. Even in wartime she wears it !—security, since she has her place. No war of races or classes can touch it,—are we not here, Crawfords, to prove what she has done ? One of us is missing, truly: she has lost a son by the war. She is adored the more for it. But, Bess,—*he was less hers than mine.* I dare to say this to you. We were a model Scottish family, and I was the top of it. It was I worked for those boys, suffered for them, not Mother. All the later travail for Steenie, the bitterest, most inglorious, the *real-est*, was mine and Cardie's. Really, Mother in her well-won security just abstained.

Bess, the first thing I loved in Wick was that he noticed this, he saw it from the moment he entered Mother's house. He worshipped at her with the rest, he admired Meg, but he noticed the facts of me. *How* many men would pick up at a glance, like that, the burden of an eldest daughter ? Always straining, as I was, when Mother was receptive and queensome. How many men regard a woman for her doing at all, more especially that kind of doing, not paid work, but toiling at life. 'Unsentimental,' that was what Mother called him: all our Scots, over women, are sentimental extremely: we are theories, not things to them,—look at——! I never thought Conor could want me, I thought on instinct

he was making for Meg. She had nothing to do but be nice, which she is, dear Meggie. I made friends with him, as one must: and with yours (whom he lugged in) just as promptly. New brothers, a trifle more subtle than mine, they were. And then, all unforeseen, he picked me up, raised me high,—above Mother herself. (Of course Mother immediately changed, I was quite another thing to her). The *rest* of it! I swore then and there, for that rest he gave me, rest in his real interests I never would. I would go on and on, never exist, *even for him*. Never sacrifice, *even to him*, new interests, views and opinions, arising about me. Never, never, steal from Aileen, as Mother in all her beautifulness, stole from me!

Don't tell them, will you? Because I love pretending to be honourable and rangée in nice men's eyes. I love queening it: I even like being a duchess, dreadfully. But, until I see things fairer to all women, here on earth, I will not be rangée in my own eyes, nor honourable least of all. I decline, Bess. I am too happy—too blest—too *privileged*. Mother, in all her royal progress to romantic contentment, never admitted that!

Cardew, Ronald, Shere, du Frettay, and a few generals, to self, Suir, and Lady Iveagh.

What's the matter with Jamesie? What has dried up the infant? Why isn't he writing?

Jamesie to the Dowager Duchess—in pencil, but well written.

DEAR GRANDMOTHER,

I am in bed with a cold. ✓ Mother says I had better not have the ink, for reasons, and Father's gold Pen has

gone back. It went wrong, and he sent it, and I took it to a Gentleman in the Avenue de l'Opéra, who shook it, and so it was all right. Wasn't it clever? I expect Father had shaken it Hundreds of times. Perhaps it was the Bombardment did it, I said, and He* laughed. He has heaps of pens from the Front to manage. Nurse's sister at Holmer's better, you'll be glad to hear. Nurse said Trix told her, by Cable. Mustn't it have been exciting, when it came! These are Exciting Times. Denise thought her Uncle was dead once, because he stoped writing. Did you think I was dead when I stoped writing, Grandmother?† Because it was only Father! Oh he is Funny, never mind. The 3 Green Stamps on this envelope I stuck on weeks ago. Then he suddenly came on Leave (1 Night) and said he had never meant you. *Your* safe! So here we are!

Your affectionate grandson,

JAMESIE C. SUIR.

Jamesie to Aileen.

[NOTE. — The Fitzmacloshlies were a family of eighteen or so, who belonged by right of invention to Jamesie, but were shared in a cousinly and secondrate fashion by Kells.]

DEAR AILEEN,

I am writing to you about the Fitzmacloshlies, because There safe. Once Starfreeda (thats the 3rd youngest, next to little Magnesia, and Baby, who's the youngest of all) wanted to marry somebody. So Sandwich (thats the Fitzmacloshlie who preeches) said you

* The Gentleman.

† Joke, tentative.

had better not, because his Grandfather was probly a German. So Badger (thats the nice one, who was back on Leave) said Hard Luck ! But Starfreeda did marry him. So the Police exiled her to an Island (there were Oysters luckily). So then Badger found his Grandfather wasn't one, after all. So then the Police fetched them back, and gave him an English Uniform, and a Permis de Séjour, and a Laisser-Passer in the Zone de Guerre. This is all as true as true, Parole d' Honneur !

Your loving

JAMESIE.

The same to Kells, containing an interesting sketch of the centre of European civilisation, as seen in late February, 1916.

DEAR KELLS,

I am sitting outside a Restaurant with Father, not Mother because Men sit here. He will see this letter perhaps. There are 5 Poilus in Casques (Blue) sitting at this table. They are drinking coffee, like us. Whatever I said they laugfed, so I let Father. He talks French (rather)* well. Once with Mother I saw a Chasseur Alpin in the Champs Élysées, who Saluted me ! She said because I stared. I don't think he minded. Perhaps Father won't have another Leave for ages, because he won't ask. M. Gabriel says he could with Piston.† Oh dear only one Walk it is awful never mind. All the big dogs are muzled here and look frightened naturally. The Dust-boxes stand out in the road, and the little dogs get in when the Chiffonniers have finished.

* Erased by the Censor.

† Untranslatable, ' interest in high places '

I expect the Transport has taken the Dust-cart horses, because the snow has practiclly all gone, nothing but MUD. Love to Everybody,

Yours,

J. C. SUIR (R.F.C., etc.).

[This leave of Iveagh's seems to have been an eventful one.]

Jeannette to the Duchess.

I do not think you need be concerned, my dear, about your sister-in-law's domestic capacity. Mad and I met Jamesie on a car to-day, the Henri-Martin car, one of the last left running, and continually *en panne*.* He was all alone, hands clasped between knees, affably studying the ciphers on every uniform in sight. There is never an Embusqué escapes *his* eagle eye, I'll warrant! He had been seeing his father off, short leave I gathered; Lady Iveagh not attending them because of a domestic upset. Report as follows to Madeleine: 'It's the next Femme de Ménage gone off to the Métro, rather suddenly. She thinks the pay is better, and it probly is. That's the fourth since Christmas not counting the one who went as soon as she came before she even took her shawl off. Mother says she likes it. She and Father cooked the dinner eas-ully. And I'm goin' to do the washing-up.'

The Dowager Duchess to Lady Iveagh.

I hope James is all right: he speaks of a cold. Kells of course has colds continually, but I never remember James being in bed even for a day before. I always

* Breakdown, the motorist's term.

took your word for it he had inherited none of the Wickford weaknesses. I hope the air of the quarter you have chosen is not too damp for him. I seem to remember Passy being under water in the time of the floods. It is extraordinary to reflect nowadays how stirred we all were about that. The weather is appalling here,* such gales, and in England worse; however I am aware the Intelligence Department asks us not to exchange views about such things, for what object, they know best. I really wrote to ask if you would order me the following (*list*). Being matters of common family life, and not even surgical, that idiot Kitchin seems afraid to ask for them. Really I shall soon think such women should be married by force, at least for a month or two, in order to rub their noses against realities. I have to put up with her since (*Grievances*). He† cannot be very seriously occupied where he is, that he is able to interfere to such an extent in Wickford's affairs. And why on earth should he forbid poor little James to write to me? Except for the word 'laugh,' which James never gets right, his English spelling has improved remarkably. It is creditable, since he is learning another language.

Trix Adler—end of a letter to Iveagh.

. . . I am sorry to hear from Janet that you have quarrelled with your mother again.

Iveagh to Trix.

I have not quarrelled with her, I have merely proved to my own satisfaction and his that Miss Kitchin is in

* Boulogne.

† Iveagh.

the right of it. Of course he knew in advance she would be, having had the accountant's training, whereas Mother merely came through Girton and so on, and that some time since. . . . However I had the papers here, both hers and Mother's, since you are aware he gives me the dirty work as a rule, particularly where a little breeze or two is probable. And the Boulogne set that is Mother's feminine in the extreme, conducted in three inks and bristling with question-marks, touching to handle for anyone that knows her ways. And sure enough the oversight was at her end, merely an ought left out in the preliminary finals, making it look as if Miss K. had welshed ninety pounds,—and that poor peaky female acquitted entirely. Well, how would I not tell her so? There is her living depending on it and lots to come, whereas Mother's future, what there is of it, is certain to be comfortable. I cannot see her coming on the world with both of us to back her, and so I consoled her when she complained of me. . . .

Miss Kitchen, in her genuine hand of write, barely known to her employers, to Iveagh.

DEAR LORD IVEAGH,

Can I ever thank you enough? Your brother says it is to you I owe my reinstatement, and that nice little summary of accounts. I had never supposed my books were without blemish, indeed; one has not the time one would wish with three Funds running, all (thank heaven) so prosperous, and the shopping as well, which, being the least accustomed, is, I own, the most onerous part. I had warned her Grace that bargain-hunting and matters which the conventional woman

loves, were foreign to my clerical habits, and calculated to confuse; and when the mistake occurred and she charged me with it, I was so overwhelmed that I could but lay it to the discomposing effect of that. Your wife will support me, I am sure, in the assertion that shopmen are steadily more bad-tempered. They dislike bargainers in these days, it is too easy to understand why. It is every man for himself, is it not? We all know what it is now to make the ends meet, or to endeavour to do so. And for this* reason, as well as the honour of my profession, you must let me thank you again.

It is justice, may I say, that we ask for. There seems to me so much generosity, rather sloppy generosity, going about the world. But a little stroke of justice, cool and clear, like that, at exactly the right moment, builds one up almost to the old level again. One has hopes then, that when all this rather wearing wash of sympathy and so on is over, something more solid will be left. . . .

['A jolly nice letter,' said Iveagh when he gave me this,—he had actually kept it. 'It's clear enough cricket is her weakest point.']

Sophie to Francis, in a little grey envelope, enclosing a portrait of General Pétain.

DEAR FRANÇOIS,

Here is a card from my brother Louis. You will be please to know he goes well and they will hold them. It says in Paris now largely that Pétain will hold. The head is chiffonnée a little that I wear him in side my

* Poverty?

frock. Yet not for long since the hard carte showed itself where the soft paper letters do not.

SOPHIE.

Francis to Sophie.

MY DARLING,

Thank goodness I can say no more. Whose paper letters have you in your frock? Unless mine, generals or no, you are to burn them. Marching orders. See?

FRANCIS.

Sophie to Francis.

MON CŒUR,

Sois sage, ne t'emballe pas, ne te fais pas, as now they say. Voyons! He who I have in my frock is very, very handsome, more beautiful than Miss Joyce, with the blue eyes, the fine features, and écoute! he is lost for five days. He come back with his biplan, what blessing for his mother. Hein? Monsieur Jamesie inform me, by permission he says. Cher petit chou, he dare not speak of you, he writes not. Shall I come see you soon?

Francis to Sophie.

MY SWEET HEART,

What is all this about? Who is the blighter? His eyes won't be blue very long when I get my feet again. Come down and tell me all about it, I want you.

F. B.

Sophie to Francis.

No, my eyes to me are ugly I have cried too much. Yes, perhaps well, but tell me first if you eat your dinner, man, and if you see Miss Joyce. Quick, tell me.

Francis to Sophie.

B—— Miss Joyce. Why do you make me say what the Censor objects to? I hear her, since nobody can help it, when she takes to plunging on that eternal piano. I wish they would give us back our Gramophone, at least that only turns on when asked for. Who is that air-man you talk of darling? I never knew what it was in those fellows get the women, the little wings on their pocket probably. They don't have nearly the time we infantry do I can tell you. It can't be his lordship, can it? You would never keep him on your heart, would you, Sophie? Look here, I shan't eat a scrap of dinner until you tell me, that is fact.

Kells to Jamesie.

We had a rotten game of Rounders to-night because of those French. With two of them I dare say I should have expected it. Mademoiselle really wants to learn and its high time Gerald* did, but Mlle. can't run far without getting pumped, so I asked Sophie specially for Gerald to see what a Rounder was. If she'd bowled decently I'd have shown him. But while I was explaining the rules she was singing, and just when I was ready for Gerald she picked him up and ran away with him down the path. Mlle. went after to jabber at her, and there I was with Aileen! A jolly way for the children to learn the game! I thought Nurse might help when she came out, but Sophie went and kissed her, as if it was absolutely the ordinarest thing! I can tell you Nurse looked redish still she kept her Hair and took

* The third Suir, aged three.

Gerald to bed. So I said I had better put the lesson off considering all things, and told Aileen to put the things away, and Sophie she'd better get strait before she went to Mother, and then I went in.

Aileen to the Duke.

[Immaculate, helped by Nurse.]

DEAR FATHER,

We all played Rounders it was Lovely. Gerald fell down but Sophie stopped him (crying) till Nurse came. I love Sophie more than Lettice. Mother says I may be Bridesmaid because Kells and Jamesie and Gerald and Arthur can't. They are boys. Kisses to Uncle Cardie and Uncle Ronald and Uncle Iveagh. . . .

[So speaks the sole maiden of the Suir contingent, already modestly aware of her status amid the clan. There will be a fine arch of swords, one of these days, at Aileen's wedding: Tim's Irish instinct was right. A simple scarcity may be the plain cause why the Woman's Right was so easily upheld in that ducal family.]

Francis to the Duchess.

YOUR GRACE,

We are getting married the end of this month,* since you make no objection Sophie says and I shall be easily on my legs by then, which is all I ask. The actual day we leave to your convenience and she is prepared in all to abide by your advice. But since you ask my ideas, and Mr. Herbert agrees with me I place them down.

* March.

When I go back, which cannot be long, her fancy had been to come and visit her parents, and then find some work in the hospitals to do. But I argue this, she would see me oftener if she stayed this side, odd though it may seem, that being her Ladyship's experience. It would be by no means easy to reach Paris not being an officer even, and more she is used to England now. Nor I could not get leave to travel along with her so little gained to my thinking. I count on the fact she will be English herself by then.* So since in your Grace's kindness you offer to keep her, I think far best, and what is more her earnings would replace her with her parents somewhat, that seeming to be her father's line. As for short visits to them, though I should like to fall in for Sophie's sake, with the Sea as at present I don't like to think of it. So in short that is my decision that she stop. If the old people like to come across to her well and good but I doubt it. French don't mobilise so easy as us, used to colonies and so on. Yet one thing more if your Grace will excuse such length, and it is not asking too much. It would be a pleasure to me and a pride if Canon Oxborough would marry us. I have not got over at his age facing the horrors of War. It was better even than Captaining our Cricket, though that was sporting truly. Would your Grace and those as know him judge and refuse beforehand if asuming too much in this. With respectful thanks for all your goodness to her.

Yours obediently,

F. BLAKIE.

* Joke.

The Duchess to the Canon.

DEAR UNCLE LIONEL,

Do you remember Francis Blakie, one summer, a Century and a century since, 156 not out against the girls? Well, he is marrying one of those same girls, my little French maid who fell over her wickets. You might have forgotten her (though pretty) but you would not him. He is now a still greater man, a convalescent Corporal in the Staffs, and he requests you as a peculiar favour to marry him. Is there a chance of it, at Holmer, first days of next month, or last of this? Of course we should love to have you there, on whatever excuse. I am sending Wick to Paris for the purpose of bringing off Bess or Jamesie, one or the other. Mother (his) will probably be over too. Aileen is to be bridesmaid, in a frock full of windows. *Now*, Uncle, can you resist?

P.S.—Conor may bring off Iveagh's beautiful French Captain too, if he is handy, and resting. A blue uniform would complete my little maid's romance, and I do want it to be nice for her, since they have been through tribulation. I don't ask you if you know M. du Frettay, because all the family does, but me. Conor, though he calls him a rotter, simply pores over his letters, written in slangy French and classic English alternately; and Ronald, who looked at him once in Paris in pre-war days, was seriously struck by his 'form.'

The Canon to the Duchess.

MY DEAR JANET,

Resist? Is it likely? Why, bless the man, what does he mean by not asking me in person? Using a woman as a cat's-paw after a show like that, I had thought better of him (let him see this). I will shake hands with him first, and marry him second, and kiss the bride third if he is not careful. Remember her? Are you aware what you are saying, Janet? *She caught me out.* Never mind, I forgive her, and her whole nation as well, since this magnificent resistance. They have caught the lot of us out. One of our boys, to one of their girls? Why, I feel quite cheered by the prospect. We only need our young scoreswoman, what was her name, to be (as Farrar puts it) an entire and perfect chrysolite. Where (by the way) does that quotation come from? If it is the Bible, Scotchwoman, don't tell my parishioners I asked.

Your affectionate uncle,

LIONEL OXBOROUGH.

[Scrawled in later, and with a wearier hand.]

Du Frettay, now,—I met him twice. Read yours again. First, Iveagh brought him to call in my working-morning, and he told me several things new to me about the English Church. Smart young rascal, trying to catch the old man at every turn,—but he did not. Next was at a school-treat you must have heard of, which turned into a fairy-tale, as things did then. Du Frettay might have stood for the fairy-prince, too, only the princess fell to Iveagh. Pretty girls, pretty follies, Janet.

Spring then, wasn't it?—and they call this spring! Cruel, cruel. 'Fled is that music—do I wake or sleep?'

L. O.

Denise to Kells.

[Evidently Kells admired this letter, see later.]

MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS,

I desire with Grandmaman to thank you and your Mother profoundly that you invite me with Jamesie to the Mariage of my compatriote Mademoiselle Colmar, but Alas! Such joy I am obliged to refuse. I find not easy to interrupt my Studies nor my Sadness of days, though it is true my Uncle en Permission for the moment enjoys your gracious Father's society. Yet we see already the end of his term expire with trembling. I promise him I will leave no more his Mother's side. The Future is dark. Thus I will see part Jamesie with desolation, regret, but firmness. Must women not also hold the post?

With salutation most heartfull to your sister also,

I inscribe myself,

DENISE MONTEIL.

Gabriel du Frettay, to the Duchess.

MADAME,

The enclosed disgusting composition seems to be the best my niece can improvise; but in mere self-defence I must add a word to it. The reference to myself I trust I need not say is pure invention; my mother would not miss Denise to speak of, whereas your nephew she will miss regularly when the hour of his accustomed

reading comes round. It is extraordinarily kind of you and characteristic of the remembered hospitality to ask her. Had I myself the requisite permission, who more willing to escort her, and make the acquaintance of Wickford's Duchess, of whose charm and wisdom from Iveagh I have heard so much! With what eagerness would I revisit the loved corners of Holmer and of Hatchways,—with what satisfaction would I dislodge this trumpery Amazon from her pedestal! My countrywomen's attitude has been admired, but mon Dieu! attitude is not everything. It is towards yours one looks for acts, it is still you who possess the signal martyr. . . . Wickford's family, his daughter also, I fain would see: see alone, for I am afraid of children. Jamesie's English beauty, sane and straight, has been the solace of this my short breathing-interlude from the senseless indecency of our life beyond. I fear my pen, like my tongue, halts in English nowadays. Excuse me, hein?

Yours obliged and devoted,

G. DU FRETAY.

[So the 'sadness of days' creeps into everything, even his careless gallantry. But the following is free from it.]

Document, indescribable.

TO DEAR FRANCIS AND SOPHIE (*illuminated*). Congratulations from the Suir family.

I can trust Jim to make remarks for me. Good luck to you, Blakie.

I. S.

We are sorry, Sophie, for its rather défraîchie condition.

E. S.

It had to go to the Front and Father kept it. I painted the dear Francis and Mother painted the Sophie. She made Lilies and Roses, and I made the Flags. M. Gabriel wanted to help, but we didn't let him. He is sending his Photograph. We have simply Dozens too in case of the Police. Father says Perhaps I may come he will see about it Francis. So au Revoir Mesdames and Gentlemen, vive la Patrie !

N.B. I would have put Debout les Morts and On les Aura*, but Mother wouldn't let me.

JAMES CONNELLAN SUIR.

* * * *

[I pause, says Herbert, because I doubt my courage as documentary. Would not that serve well enough, as the end of our romance ? However, I sort the remainder, since du Fretay urges me.]

Controversy, Kells and Jamesie ; which must have occurred quite early in this section, to judge by the date of Bess's letter attached. It was this letter, given me by Kells' nurse, which spurred me to hunt up the correspondence. Jamesie begins :

I was talking to Sandwich† once, and Sandwich said, just supposing we had lots of lives. And just supposing you died in this one, and woke up and found yourself a German, what would you do ? Wouldn't it be horrible ? Because you would think about the Belgians and Miss Cavell and the *Lusitania* and the tumble-down Churches and Gassing and Liquid Fire and heaps of things. Well ! I couldn't say much. Its only to be hoped we

* Parisian catchwords of the period.

† The serious Fitzmacloshlie, who preached.

wont, I said, so longs we're English. So Sandwich said further,* Yes. Only we have to be decent English here and now not just go one better than the Germans. So I told Francis what he said and F. B. said it was a bit of All-Right ! (It was Mother realy.) That's all that happened that time.

J. C. S.

Kells—magnificent.

I don't think you'd better mix the Fitzmacloshlies, who are Old Pretending, with serous things. Theres only one thing, according to us,† you could do if you found yourself a Boche, as per contra your letter, that would be to shoot yourself with your Enfield and be found by your orderly in the morning, dead. Then it would be seen to be something like Roman History, and the corspondent coming by would make a story or perhaps a Despatch about it, when it was known who you were.‡

Yours, K.

[Jamesie dreamed about this, which demonstrated, I cannot but think, the Duke's son's Irish blood.]

No but look Here [he started fresh] Sandwich, who is awfully like Mother in what he thinks at times, said further, this. If you woke up a German, you would be proud of been a German, every bit as proud as Lady I. and Corporal F. B. to be English (because Sandwich knows them) or Private T. G. to be Irish, or M. le Cap. du F. to be French, or Miss T. A. at Salonika to be Stars

* Sandwich always 'says further,' while Badger's style is brief.

† The Clan Crawford.

‡ Kells.

and Stripes. (That was a kind of joke for Sandwich, because he makes them like Uncle Lionel not very funny but People laugh.) Well! I said I'd tell my Cousins but he mustn't be surprised if you were different. Because such is Life! Mother modeled in snow on the balcony a White Rabbit sitting up. You simply can't think how heavenly it was till its Ears went because I kissed them too hard.

J. C. SUIR.

I simply can't help it about the Fitzmacloshlies [added Jamesie artlessly in a postscript] they are always saying things and I have to listen I hear them different voices. Father asked how Badger was the other day. Hows Badger he put. Because he knew he had been Wounded rather Bravely never mind.

J. C. S.

I've given up kissing rabbits [Kells went off at a tangent] and girls except my Silkworms occasionally. I explained to Aileen. And I won't have Biscuit kissed by her now he's my Charger, anyhow I don't believe he likes it really. She must do without us both. I only might perhaps her, like Uncle Ronald does Mother, when I'm home on Leave. And even then its more Mother I've noticed. Its quite easy to let her and not to, I have tried.

Yours, etc.,

KELLS.

P.S.—Aileen* wants to know how Badger was wounded.

Lady Iveagh to Kells.

Dear, do you mind my answering? Jamesie did not even read it. Partly he was at St. Germain, and partly I did not want him to when he came back. I looked into your envelope to get news. I don't want him to follow your example, and pretend to kiss his mother, letting her do it. I have known men go through life letting women do the loving and the slaving, but they are men who make England no better. Perhaps they treat England their Mother in the same way, taking all and paying nothing, or paying with pretence. As for their own special Mother—no! Kiss her, will you, for me to-night?

Love from us, yours,
E. S.

Nurse to her recovered sister at Salonika.

I grant Lady Iveagh has got in with Kells where I could not. I grant it freely. She got him on his own ground, *Patriotism*, and there I never thought of it. He hid the letter and pretended it was nothing, but he was excited all day, and at night I found him in a state.* It is nerves I know well enough, half his scenes are that. I am fearful always with such natures. Making out to disdain me and his mother too, yet he will never have the strength to do long without someone. I soon had it,†—putting his mother and England together for him, I call it genius. And the Lamb he can be when he likes, so simple, and that's the real child, I tell everybody. I fetched his Mother finally, having asked him. You

* Crying.

† Kells' confidence.

could see her relieved as much, poor woman, she has cares enough. She talked to him some time. She and Jamesie's between them have settled my fears for some time to come. I can only pray to be allowed to carry it on. . . .

[And when the Scotch nurse said Prayer, she meant it. She spent much upon Kells.

I pass on. Shere was smashed up in the first week of March.]

Joyce to Jeannette.

I have an idea of crossing to Paris presently, to look about me, so warn Mad in case she seizes the occasion to clear out to Salonika, and leave me her car. I have several reasons for coming. One is the secret service, since Reuss gave me some messages once which till this minute I had forgotten. And though I have no special desire to oblige a Boche, senile and sentimental always, overfed then, but thin as I hope by this time, still it might be rather alluring tracking his acquaintance down. They are probably celebrated people; also if I managed well, I might be taken for a spy. I should rather fancy myself as a German Jewess, because I have known some fairly handsome ones. Another reason is that unadulterated English Tommies make one bilious. A taste for hymn-singing,—and sharing the hymn-book with *her*,—is at the root of all their characters. I don't wonder the Continent calls us uprighteous hypocrites the least; because you can't be uprighteous, being a man, without being a hypocrite, can you? Except over your side,* where they go one better still. No, France is the land for me. I have thought so ever since this time last week,

* America.

when I happened to see the photo of that young aviator Maddie mentioned, the one that knows Bess Suir. I now understand from Wick that he has long been dying to know me—impersonally. He told Iveagh so, and Iveagh never informed me, little rat. . . . I never yet conducted an impersonal interview, any more than in the old days I could ever manage when the Captain* suggested I should make an impersonal appeal. It always grew personal at once, as soon as I caught the eye of the man in the street. Bless him, and how he came after me, gaping,—O the dear old days!

My last reason of all is Linda, who will certainly, if this goes on, make an all-fired ass of herself over Shere. From the minute she heard Jack was broken up, and would never be any good again, her one squirrel-in-a-cage idea has been to chuck all, and join on to him. She may or may not poison Reginald first. The bother is, Reggie is frightfully sorry for her,—oh Lord, the idiotic situation it is,—can women never see things straight for an instant? What will she gain by making a fool of herself over a dying man, who doesn't want her,—so I have had a set of the usual scenes with her, when all I want is to get in a corner and cry about Jack. What are the men all doing, getting knocked about? It is spoiling everything, and I fail to see the sense of it, anyhow just as I did. The colour has gone out of it, and the style,—proof, I have to chuck up things rather, and go to Wickford about it, since he has got some decency and common-sense. Monk hasn't either. . . . When it comes to a pass like this, you must have *men*, confound it. And a kind that see with you, as that lot do, without fussing and climbing on pedestals, and

* Feminist camp.

raking up the past. I wish he had a little more finesse and originality, that's all, he always strikes me as rather a second-best. And yet I do loathe a touch-me-if-you-venture, this-style-and-no-other man,—I suppose I may be hard to satisfy. Wickford is recalled, or has recalled himself, about this Irish ferment, which is worse than appears (Janet told me privately) . . . look out how you use my facts; and that is why he offered to bring over Mad's protégé, the kiddy Suir. I shall pin him if I possibly can for an interview: he will be in demand, but he may have time for me. I hope he does not go on to Ireland instantly,—bother politics, what do they *matter* compared with a question like this? Think of Jack as he was, and think of Linda—I won't say how—and think of Reginald, snivelling almost. At the worst I shall be driven to go to Janet: and Janet is jealous of me, and oh, she is Scottish-pie.* . . . Anyhow, if Linda insists on crossing, she does not cross without me. I shall be coming along with her. And I ask you as a *neutral*, Jeanie,—as a neutral in the old scrap† and the new scrap,—to cover up the move.

Jeannette to Joyce.

Why, that is good, and we shall be as pleased to see you both! But, my dear, she never will get to him, and for two reasons. One is that he cannot see anybody. Mad knows from a girl in the hospital. Another is, Linda is neither relative, engaged to him, nor bears his name. It is not so easy for the casual female to pass the guards on the serious cases. It is not like the novels: now every doctor in the universe is a little clay god:

* Pious.

† Joyce classifies as I do, evidently.

with a temper instead of a heart attached to him, since they are driven most to death. Bedside incidents, and she could hardly avoid it, are barred by the faculty anyway. She had much better wait, till these same little gods settle about him; better, I mean, than hanging about the hospital bureau, which looks badly, and is useless, and would worry her life out. Give her my love and Mad's, and say we will keep the eye of a neutral lynx upon him, and wire you regularly. Any friend could ask that, I am bulletining Beatrix on the subject. Still, being in England, I will address the wires to you. But don't let her think for a moment we should not love to have her come.

[Joyce alludes above to Ireland. Ireland lay at the back, of course, of all these latter developments, with which the letters deal. The constant preoccupation can be tracked in the Duke's sober epistles, and it has the touch of desperation, always, in Iveagh's. He could stand nobody on the subject: unless perhaps Byrne. He snubbed his brother, was rude to me, and outraged (as I understand since) Ronald Crawford's best feelings. As for Tim, to Francis, that scape-grace free-lance was sardonic, or indifferent,—until he stopped being either.]

Iveagh, in a temper: to his wife of course.

Will you answer this, or get Wickford? I suppose he has the leisure for it, fooling round the theatres with you and Gabriel. He had better, for if I do at length I will let myself go. I do not feel as saint-like now as I did when I sat in his office over there. I feel wild at times. I have my reasons. She* is right enough,

* Mary Geoghan.

there is no sense in the scheme of things. She is right every word she says, and you can tell him so. He had better preach a little to her, just as it takes him, I give up. I thought that man* would get through somehow, being nothing of any particular value to them beyond. What's the good of taking him? He could never do even his own business properly. His manners to his family were not select. It is only I wanted him in the life, cheeking me, not an ugly corpse. I call this a useless business. I have broken my little flash-light.

I. S.

Look here let the boy write to Mary, he has something of the angel left in him [added Iveagh hastily].

[Whether Jamesie did or not, I cannot say. If so, it remained treasured too closely in those hands 'beyond' to come my way. Mary's own I have, and Bess's about it. The Duke's to Mary, after a pause, I discard, though kind enough. It is a statement of his political faith, and any reader of intelligence can guess the sort of thing. I am not concerned in this collection with politics,—except Jamesie's. And his were fitful,—thank the Saints!]

Mary Geoghan, Castle Wickford, addressed to Lord Iveagh Suir.

Will your lordships darling help my poor mother or else your ladyship I write to the pair of you asking you of your goodness to forgive. Tim is gone from us, and it is not only the Money failing us nor himself who being the last was close to her mind for all his pranks and

* Tim.

absense, it is the trouble of it in our present Case. For has he not given his heart's blood for the army that is oppressing us, and why would he have gone so far away to die in a foren land for a foren cause when his own needed him for Her delivery? Where is the sense of it that speak of Belgium? All countries has their wrongs and some may speak of it and call atension and others drag themselves in exile or in captivation for no more an Act than kissing their country's flag. Where is the reason if there is anny in all of it darling, you that had the heart for us this long while if the Soldiers have not changed you which I pray but do not beleve. It is out of the vally of Death we turn to you who must remember at least our will for loyalty, that has seen your ladyship our pride in him and striving to beleve and trust when not too overtaken as at present time.

Dutifully,

MARY GEOGHAN.

Dearest, I am sorry dreadfully [wrote Bess, picking truth out of two words in her husband's scrawl]. I am glad you answered her, even if it was only a line or two, though his was certainly very nice. He showed it me. Only all I could think of was how much nicer yours would have been if you had said all you wanted to. As you would have, if you had been sitting saint-like in the untidy office out there, and she had come to you crying. That's the worst of you, you are much more afraid of paper than you are of people,—I told Wick, and he agreed. It is that she wants too, poor darling,—tragic she is. Oh, those are the tragic people! The mothers and sisters of the happy warriors, fighting without a back-thought in a cause they are sure of, are blest in

comparison. . . . I hope you have not broken all your things, throwing them about while you felt like that. Or was it only the flash-light? J. is sending you another. [Lady Iveagh added] Aileen will mind.

Iveagh to Aileen.

Will you write to me, darling, now Tim has gone forward? I'll never be so good a soldier, but I am as good a horseman as he was. Send me a line.

IVEAGH SUIR.

Aileen to Iveagh—not helped by anybody.

I write to you dear not to cry have all Tims horses and Fathers and my I made one eting Grass for Uncle Ronald I love you kisses from

AILEEN.

Iveagh to Aileen.

Thanks, that's the ticket. Send me a picture next and I will be better because my knee hurts.

IVEAGH SUIR.

[Fury among the Crawfords at the front. Cardew writes recriminating to Wickford, and Ronald solemnly appeals to Janet. He could bear Suir's attitude on Ireland, says Ronald, but Aileen was another thing. The picture of the horse, did Janet observe, had been intended for him, Ronald,—it had his name on it. Now Suir had got it, and said it was a very good horse, and would not give it up. It was not as though he could *really* ride, wrote Ronald, with his knee in its present condition, unless, of course, he had exchanged from the cavalry on false pretences. It was the usual, pestilential, Suir Swank with girls that Janet knew about. . . . 'I do, dear,' said Janet.]

Kells to Jamesie.

Well of all Side ! Heres Aileen made up a song now about writing to Uncle I. and nobody else but her being alowed to. I like that. I told her I would here and now if I happened to have to about anything special like for instance Biscuit's cough. He did have one the other day when he had been eating bullrushes. And now of course I can't ask Tim. So I just send this bit to put along with yours, or not if he is waxy, because then I can tell the child its gone. Lettice says Green says Mother told Grandmother he is in a Precious Wax about your coming with Father when he isn't alowed to. Well of course Father is first in Requirment considering the H. of Lords. Were as I should say the Aviation is more useful where it is. I only mention this to you, you needn't show him, besides he probably knows it which is why he Grouses. I hope you will come I say no rotting because its about time. Theres my Birthday too though no one seems to think of it. That French kid writes decent letters. Say we're sorry and all that because I've no time* for writing French.

Yrs etc., etc.,

KELLS, K.C.B.

[It was about the 8th or 9th Wickford came over, his knowledge being, as his son said, 'in requirement' at headquarters. He looked worried a bit as was natural, otherwise superbly well. He had acquired something of the snappish manner of the high command, which strove with the Irish current of his customary speech rather amusingly. I lunched with him at his Pall Mall Club,—now in exile like most of them,—and I took

Corporal Blakie, who was of course presentable anywhere. It had been one of my particular and private designs to get the Suirs and Francis into contact. So far, they linked together by their womenkind only; except officially, as it were, on the cricket-field, they had never met. The trouble was, Wickford was the Suir who constantly came over; and he, though he recognised Francis's claim politely, was a Duke.]

'Have you got Jamesie?' I started naturally.

'I have,' said Wickford. 'How are you, Blakie? Nobody else, I am afraid, Herbert.'

I said I did not expect her, mendaciously.

'Jim,' said the Duke to both of us, 'is planted at Holmer with my lot, till my mother goes back. Whether or no inclusive of the wedding.' He shifted his eyes. 'Sorry, Blakie.'

'Don't mention it, your Grace,' said Francis gravely. 'I hope Lord Iveagh is well.'

'Well, that's it,—he is not specially. It might be this business beyond, affecting him. He's been harrying all and sundry, a fair bit.' He glanced at me. 'Iveagh's grouching,—I can't make him out. He might not have liked letting me have the infant, wantin' his skilled supervision to see things nice enough. What's the joke?'

'Isn't the divinity hedging a duke enough for him?'

'It is, just,' said Wickford. 'Only just. I told him his best hope was to have another, then he needn't be so inordinately vain of this one.' His eye moved to the wounded. 'Are ye not sitting down?'

We did so, for a moment or two. It was nice to be talking to a Suir again; one gets to the roots of things with them so quickly, dukes or otherwise. I found I could ask immediately what I most desired to know.

‘Is he vexed with Bess?’

‘No, no: Bess has her business. He sent her word by me she could stay.’

‘Perhaps he hoped, nevertheless, you would persuade her.’

Wickford looked at me surprised. ‘Janet said that. What has got you both? Why wouldn’t the boy tell me so, if he wished it? None would have been readier than I to persuade her. You don’t doubt that?’—as we laughed.

‘No. It’s a pity Janet wasn’t there, that’s all. She might have ventured to overrule him.’

Wickford owned she might.

‘Why did Blakie smile at me?’ he demanded, across the luncheon-table, when he had done the nice thing by Francis, and Francis had gone.

‘He’s a bridegroom: you must excuse him.’

‘Come off,—why did he?’ said Wickford. The pair have an easy trick of interrogatory, casual as it were, that gets you before you know. I told him.

‘I daresay he was reminded, as I was, of a former conversation. Something he had heard about you.’

‘About me? Blakie had heard?’

‘Yes. Not at all to your discredit. Only that you were in Iveagh’s hands. Under his thumb, was the expression.’

The Duke took it easy. ‘Oh well, I may be. She is not.’

‘She is more so, if you mean Janet. Only she is not allowed to know it. That’s his art.’

‘Is it indeed?’ Wickford considered, in the interludes of carving duck. ‘That was a woman said it,’ he next observed. ‘Was it Joyce?’

'Oh, well done.' I congratulated. 'Joyce it was. Whatever made you think of her?'

'Why shouldn't I think of her? She is not easily left out. As a matter of fact, I got a letter from her this morning. Do you mean she discussed my brother with Blakie?'

'I am afraid so. Discussing is hardly the term for it, either. She dismissed your brother's character.'

'Public character? That is Steenie.'

'Private as well.' Interval. Wick's bird engrossed him, to the exclusion of Iveagh, and all else.

'Was this the musical occasion?' he next asked.

'That's it. What a lot you know. After the Kreutzer, in the garden. She let fly at him finally, Francis said: I suppose, for Francis's benefit.'

'I like that idea, discussing him for the benefit of Blakie,' said Wickford, disapproving. He settled to the duck,—and dropped the Duke. 'It's a mania the girl has. She did so with Shere. It appears now, my brother took her by the scruff once, in the course of conversation. Just shook her and left her, no more,—only now it is clear to himself he should have avoided it. He ought to have steered clear between that course and kissin' her, so he informed me,—indeed it is obvious,—because she enjoyed it nearly as much. As a second-best the sensation was agreeable. She cannot forget the remembrance of it. That,' finished Wickford, 'would be Joyce's kind.'

'Thank you,' I said. Really, one got on, with Wickford. 'Well, Iveagh has done for himself.'

'I feared so,' said Wickford, sympathetic. 'Is she in love with him?'

'I said he had done for himself, Wickford. I told

you she took away every rag of his character, did I not ?’

‘ She might think him better without it.’ The Duke’s mouth gave a little twitch. ‘ So he would be I shouldn’t wonder. She’s a girl of taste.’

‘ I believe you both admire her,’ I observed.

‘ We do,’ said Wickford. ‘ And what is more, it is rather tempting to a man—a man of Iveagh’s sort—to take her up. It would need some attention, but it is tempting. It would be worth it. I mention this between ourselves.’

‘ Is he in love with her ?’ I chaffed.

‘ He is not,—more pity for the girl,’ said Wickford. ‘ But he would like to see her sensibly settled. We both would,—the way she goes frisking about beyond the pale.’

‘ The paling,’ I substituted. ‘ Are you quite sure it is a biped we are discussing, Duke ?’

He laughed simply: but I saw his eyes. He had that kind of affection for Joyce, flattering really: for it meant, she impressed him first as being beautiful, and wild, and young. I should like to have had Iveagh’s impression to lay alongside, because he knew Joyce rather better; but he never talked so easily.

‘ Did the girl get at Bess ?’ he inquired presently: chiefly, as it seemed, to make conversation over the duck. He was not greatly concerned about it.

‘ She pitied Bess’s ignorance,—knowing herself so much more of men and travellers.’ A glance. ‘ Am I to tell you ? Francis said it was a good case she made out, capable. She struck him as a clever girl.’

‘ She is so,’ said Wickford. ‘ And she ought to be in your trade, according to my wife. She has the gift

for it, — forensic. You never heard her in the streets ?’

I said I had not had the pleasure. He remained concerned with Joyce, for all I could do. I pushed Francis’s claim.

‘Blakie,’ I said, ‘seemed to hanker a little to state the other side.’

‘What, defendin’ him ?’ Wickford was duke again.

‘He said he had an inkling about it, though arguments failed.’ Sniff from Wickford. ‘He said as a rule a woman’s attack on a man is not worth listening to, but this was well-managed.’

‘Fascinatin’ !’ Wickford looked at the ceiling. ‘I suppose he reads *Tit-Bits*.’

‘Will you be quiet, Wick ? He reads Shaw and Bergson, among other things. He has an excellent taste in literature. He listened on this occasion largely in my interest, to report to me.’

‘That’s it. Regular scrap-heaps of scandal, you advocates are. Go on.’

‘I shan’t, if you are so unpleasant. He said your brother was the right subject, to begin with.’

‘What does he know about——?’

‘He bowled along with him. Sit still. He said his lordship was all there, nothing too much, and nothing missing, as it might be in cleverer gentlemen.’

‘Golly !’ said Wickford, attracted. ‘That was one for you.’

‘I am very much afraid it was. He said in addition that—do sit still, Wick,—no doubt it was true enough about travellers and tropical climates; that you get beyond all laws there,—that it is common sense you do,—except human.’

'What's he mean by human laws?' shot Wickford, sitting still.

'That's what I wondered. And human laws, added Francis, there aren't any, not according to Miss Joyce.'

The Duke laughed. 'What did you say?' he asked soon.

'Well, to tell the truth, one finds it hard, these days, to stick up for the existence of human laws.' I looked, and his eyes followed me, to the casualty page of the *Times*.

'Shere's wounded, by the way,' he said suddenly. 'That girl Linda has got a knock. . . . Herbert, it is queer the man finding that to say, for it's true enough, in my brother's case. It's not a man without laws for himself, and bitter ones, can come through a life such as his has been, without losing by it. I grant that. Would it be that Blakie meant by human laws, every man's law for himself in horrid circumstances?'

'I gathered it would be that exactly, because of the sequel. I asked Francis, did he think himself, after his experience, that there were human laws?'

'To be sure.' Wickford fell in quickly. 'He has been in something hotter than tropical. He could judge a bit.'

'Francis said, there was nothing he was surer of. Did I think a War, he said, which was Politics, (I should not like to convey his contempt), can touch a question of that sort? Did I think Religion could, Wickford? His Humanity was much beyond.'

'Beyond religion?'

'Before, if you will. Did I think, he said finally, unless he believed in Human Law, he could dare to do what he was doing next week.'

‘Returning to France, is it? Oh, marriage!’—His tone altered oddly. He had been straining to follow me,—now he was on his own ground again.

‘Exactly. He is badly in love, and has been for two years back. He is allowed by the powers of the day to get well enough to marry her, in order to leave her almost immediately. And his first thought is to invoke human laws, not kick at the military ones that are tormenting him. How is that?’

‘It’s about the thing,’ said Wickford. He heaved himself up, between the courses, and went to the hearth. ‘You know, our men are like that. They put us to shame, out there, at every turn, and all round the basket. Talk of the turn-over,—often I think our best chance is to let them come uppermost. It is the best chance for the future, among other things.’

‘Just so.’ I looked at his back view, which is as nice as Iveagh’s,—perhaps more prosperous. ‘Not that you are doing much harm at the top, en attendant.’

‘Oh, come off it! I am an arrogant fool. I wish I had had the sense to talk to him lately; but I cannot, I have not the gumption, nor the training for it. The boy does it best.’ He waited, gathering himself for an effort really across his pride. ‘Look here, will you tell me what Blakie’s feeling was you mentioned, in Iveagh’s favour, when Joyce set on him? I’d like to know.’

‘He called it an inkling, not a feeling. I was certain it would be the counter-charge, against Joyce’s character. By all the instincts of my dull and dangerous calling, Wick, I thought it was bound to be. But it wasn’t,—it was Jamesie.’

‘I was wondering if it wouldn’t be,’ said Wickford gently. ‘Oh, Lord!’

A solution by Jamesie.

I had been reading [wrote Jamesie to me out of the blue] lots in the Library about the Irish Kings. They were good Kings. In those times we could read properly, in Grandfather's Library, heavenly smelling. I loved that Place. I think it would be right to have a King there, friends with King George, like Uncle Wick. But perhaps the Horseless Earl* would be better, because he knows Judgement† and Religion. This is a Public letter from Paris (last) because I have Uncle Wick's Army Pen.

J. C. S.

Fewilleton, by Jamesie : reported by Bess and du Frettay in collaboration, and brought over to show us by Wickford. It occurred in Madame du Frettay's drawing-room.

JAMESIE. 'Once, when Badger Fitzmacloshlie met a lady on the front called Angèle——'

MADAME (*shocked*). 'My child, there are no ladies on the front.'

GABRIEL. 'Above all, not called Angèle.'

JEANNETTE. 'She is invariably a femme-de-chambre in a first-class boarding-house.'

JAMESIE. 'Well, when he met her, and meant to marry her, he found he couldn't, possibly. Why do you think?'

GABRIEL. 'Because he had a rendez-vous.'

MADELEINE. 'Because he was married already.'

JAMESIE (*beaming*). 'Yes! Only he had forgotten

* Byrne.

† Justice?

'about it, why do you think? Because he had a little, weeshy bit of obus in his brain.'

GABRIEL (*to his mother*). 'All is well. He met her *on* the front, but *in* a hospital.'

MADELEINE. 'Luckily he remembered in time, Jamesie. Was it the doctor helped him?'

JAMESIE. 'Yes,—getting it out. The very minute it was out, he es-plained to Angèle—'

BESS. 'In French, I hope.'

MADELEINE. 'He would have to get over the ether.'

JAMESIE. 'Yes, he did. He got over it very well.'

GABRIEL. 'And out of it.'

BESS. 'Is that all about Badger, Jamesie?'

JAMESIE. 'Not quite. Because he went home to Blighty, as you'd es-pect. And he saw in London the person he was really married to—'

JEANETTE. 'What was her name?'

MADELEINE. 'Lady Badger, of course. Go on, Jamesie.'

JAMESIE. 'And so, he told her. And so she—she thought it better to write to Angèle.'

GABRIEL. 'Évidemment, espèce d'épistolaire.'

MADELEINE. 'Public?'

JAMESIE. 'Rather public.'

GABRIEL. 'Diplomatic, hein? What did she say?'

JAMESIE. 'Oh well, there isn't much to say about such things,—is there, Mother? She said—she just said—"Mademoiselle, que voulez-vous?—c'est la guerre."'

[Jamesie, I think I may say looking back, was completely happy at Holmer. The 'scrap' that occurred there, inevitably, concerning him, was over his head.]

Gabriel du Frettay to Herbert—our first exchange.

Will you excuse, Monsieur, my addressing you without other preliminaries in these particular times? You will be very kind to reassure me by a word that Suir's son is well. He is in the strangest fever, and will display it to nobody, unless by hints and outbreaks probably unconcerned with his preoccupation. I never, personally, thought him strong enough to do this wearing work. He is sleepless also from that crock-knee he had which has never cured completely owing to his culpable impatience to disregard it,—which adds to his nervousness. I do not attempt Wickford, whose fuss about nothing is familiar to me: I do not appeal to the little Duchess, because I do not know her, though perchance you might. I do not approach the mother of Suir for a multitude of reasons, each better than the last, though it is a matter, to my French taste, in which the mother's word would serve peculiarly. Nothing would induce me to disturb his wife. Get my friend Jamesie to write to him would be the simplest, for on his own part he refuses to write. He does not write to me till I have bombarded him to the verge of insult, which was useful. But I offer the word of a friend that he is wretched; and (may I add in a safe quarter) any mental distraction, for our actual calling, ought not to be. . . .

Herbert to du Frettay.

DEAR DU FRETAY,

I have heard much of you, so shall not apologise further for the unconvencion. I gathered from Wickford his brother was out of temper, which is nothing

novel. It is Ireland probably, since he has a rooted conviction, never of course expressed, that if left to himself he could govern that country. I will not tell Wickford your opinion,—nor Janet, for a reason you will scoff at. She believes in ‘second sight.’ What is more, I have heard her assert that her brother-in-law has the faculty, almost to the degree of her own Highland mother, who is remarkable. Thus in these times we cannot afford the work that would be made of it. To shut one’s eyes and prophesy evil is a safe spec. nowadays, and hardly worth giving money for. Any one with the faintest sibylline capacity, ought as a matter of course to be off their heads. Jamesie is well, bonny, and eats like a Trojan. His knees are both there, being black when I saw them with scouting in the shrubbery, or acting as a warhorse to carry Aileen, or both. He had sent a postcard without prompting to his father, and I gave him another to send to-morrow. He ‘really-and-truly’ has no time for letters. He is perfectly resigned to coming back when they want him, wedding or no. Iveagh is a little ass. I wondered too that the boards passed him, and twice over. His own doctor would never have done so, as I happened to know. Only he looks smart and slick, and has that traveller’s knack of passing muster (they have to learn it) which would carry him into Hell if he chanced to turn curious as to the parasites there. The only place it will never take him to is Heaven, his friend Byrne agrees with me. Do not for your life let him know I wrote you about him,—he and I are forever on the verge of duelling as it is. Excuse haste in this.

Yours,

ST. J. HERBERT.

[Du Frettay to Bess's aunt is missing.]

Bess's aunt to her—postcard.

What is it, my dear child? G. seems anxious. Is your husband vexed? The child is perfect, needing nobody, creating joy for himself and others, exploring with Kells and Kaffir* down in the Hatchways wood.

Bess to her aunt.

It is nothing but that I am a Fool, and he unselfish utterly. He hoped I would go with J., longed for it, I know too late; I ought to have guessed that he would not say. I might have known he would never force my conscience, nor let Wick cajole me, when he would not. Instead, he cleared all round me, as he used to do in the forest, snicking off the snaky creepers, and he left me free. And I thought of my silly soldiers, and I did not think of him, one proper minute, or set myself to imagine, through Wick's description of his nasty sulks, what he must have wanted. As if I don't know them.† . . . Of course if I had seen him, for one second—if he had come, touched me,—it is the curse of reports and writing we are condemned to live on now! We are not made for it, he and I, we can't manage,—St. John and suchlike‡ had better give us up. It is not Wick's joking about him, or his careful little notes,—careful and creeping, on padded paws, going about me with a longside look to make me comfortable—that I want, Ernestine. It is his self—oh, I am dreadful. Sometimes I think Janet is right, after all,—I only love Jamesie through him. . . .

* Iveagh's dog.

† The sulks.

‡ Oh, Bess!

[Perhaps I had better remark, lest Lady Iveagh's images startle the unwary, that she was, as artist, a passionate student and devotee of the cat-tribe. Personally, I loathe the creatures. Nor, I will say for him, is Suir the least like one. He, and Jamesie too, are much more like (say) a reclaimed jackal, or a decent sort of dog. But I venture to guess it was intended, in Bess's letter concerning him, for a compliment.]

Iveagh to the Duke—extract.

When I said a fortnight I meant a couple of weeks, and I supposed Mother did too. She dropped remarks my way about 'military exactitude.' I am also on to that. Jim's leave is up the twenty-second, which date his mother wants him. Colonel —— at Boulogne may not want Mother as much, I can't say. She wants to stretch a point for Kells' birthday, isn't it?—I have no doubt so does Jim. Only he will do what his mother tells him, and no other, see he is warned. The wedding we cannot manage anyhow, tell Blakie. . . . All Bess asks is to know where and when Mother gets off with the boy, so she can meet and pick him up. I have no objection to Mother welshing him across to Boulogne on his Majesty's service, or for the glory of God, or whatever else she is engaged on, especially as in those cases I wouldn't have to pay. But if she lowers herself to the level of the common crowd, and gets into——, I had better know. Not even she can alter the geography-books, nor patch up the train-service between the ports. I am tired considering it. Let Mother make her own arrangements. . . .

*The Dowager Duchess to Sir George Trenchard—
now in East Africa.*

Iveagh is extraordinary. His vanity and self-sufficiency, used as his brother is to him, really weary Wickford out. Now I leave you to judge, George. . . . Wickford brought the child over (James) who is really quite a sensible child, and more docile than anyone would expect of his parentage. He is not the least afraid of Lionel, and often comes of his own accord and talks to me. . . . Well, it was arranged he should go back to France when I did: and instantly, Iveagh chose to make a fuss about it; merely because I have, on mature consideration, changed my date. Poor little Kells put in a plea for his birthday, and since his birthday deserves at least as much attention as the nuptials of the ladies' maid, I decided to stretch my own holiday to include it, —merely a few days. I signified as much to Colonel — at Boulogne, and to Elizabeth in Paris, who was making her arrangements to meet James at the port. She merely has to adapt her plan to mine. Iveagh, apparently, flew out, and sent his brother the strangest letter, simply bullying in tone. How Wickford bears it I cannot see. I had not been intended, of course, to see this document: but owing to rather a fortunate accident, I did. Miss Kitchin, the superannuated female typist, is down here, supposed also to be holiday-making, owing to an attack of so-called neuritis in her hand. Being an old fuss, she makes a point of sorting Wickford's post for him every morning. What happened was he left her this one of Iveagh's to hand on to Janet, —'the Duchess,' he said. Kitchin gave it me. Then

she began floundering, of course, in apologies to everybody. I stopped her off. I told her not to disturb herself, for it was just as well I should know my sons' views. I did. Iveagh's wording was highly characteristic, I need say no more. It was both disrespectful, and profane. Lionel was really shocked, when I told him. He wrote, I am glad to say, at once,—I carefully refrained. Shortly after, Iveagh sent back what I suppose he meant for an apology to me. . . .

Canon Oxborough to Iveagh.

MY DEAR BOY,

Are you well-advised to write to your Mother, as I understand you did in your last? It is not to be supposed you do not trust her. Have you forgotten for how many years of your own youth she escorted you and Wickford (always an important person) safely across the Irish sea? You are nervous and fretful, your brother says out of sorts. Now listen: I myself am accompanying Gertrude to Boulogne, since I want to have a look at my poor boys* again, and she invites me. I fit it in before the wedding, at which I officiate. Will you accept me, for Jamesie,—and perchance apologise to her?

Iveagh to his mother, unusually well written.

DEAR MOTHER,

That is all settled then, he comes along with you and Uncle Lionel. It was only his travelling alone I did not like to think of. You would not have let Wickford at that age.

* Soldiers.

*The Dowager to Sir George Trenchard, postscript
to the letter quoted before.*

James is going on with the Pennant girls finally. Lionel is far from well, and I shall not stir till I see him better, nor allow him to travel at all. It is lucky this pair of girls going, since the child knows them, and since (between ourselves) I should not care to have Elizabeth waiting about in a foreign port. She will only have to come round to —— instead. I have wired to Colonel —— at Boulogne to see that she has no trouble about it. This, George, may be the last from me for some time. . . .

Jamesie's postcards from Holmer.

DEAR FATHER,

Oh this is a Heavenly old place. It's different from France here. There is a new Groom, polite, with clean hands. Aileen says the horses like him so it seems all right. I wish you were here to jump me on Gypsy, but can I with Him? I wrote a Public letter to Mr. H. from Paris sudenly. Oh wasn't that a waste of stamps!!

J. C. S.

DEAR FATHER,

This is No. 2 Mr. H. gave me. I write Round and Round it just for a change. We are all well except the Baby who rather squeels. Nurse says its his Tooth. Uncle W. says he's like you. *Well!* I think I am because Mr. Transome* said so. He has not gone to the

* Wickford's tailor.

War such Lots to do. I saw your uniform in his book he showed me. Can you read this weeshy finishing?

Your loving J.

DEAR MOTHER,

They are both here. It doesnt matter now on a post card does it? I heard his Bans in church to-day, 3rd Time of Asking which is Last oh Mother! Don't you think the Preacher must be glad to feeling him so brave? It was here you know he played Cricket and Uncle Lionel knows him* and besides all the men and Pelham who were looking know. So it isn't like a common Wedding, is it? Goodnight, darling Mother. . . .

[Not quite like a Common Wedding, Jamesie, with such love behind it: but it took place without you.

Shere (I hurry to close) died before Linda ever reached him. His was not a 'belle mort,' like Steenie's, far from it: though no doubt the 'little clay gods,' his doctors, did their best. Nothing, in those stilted mansions of science, in those stinking amphitheatres of surgery, can be 'fine' in that French sense. It was drawn out, most undramatically; but the tears, when the end came, were neither few nor difficult for Jack.

Linda made a rush for it, reckless of everything, wild at the news he could not wait for her; but she never accomplished even that stage of honest feeling,—fate came first.

Joyce followed, close up to her, 'covering the move' in her careless language; that is to say, on the top of a woman's courage, so much of which is frittered in saving faces, where faces had far better not be saved. Linda's was lost, of course, irrevocably; still, it is singular, significant to me, that in the most selfless act of Joyce's

* The Preacher.

life, she should have been just concerned in doing that. She kept, for all her splendour and her self-assertion, the woman's fragile outlook,—poor little Joyce.

Jamesie—I cannot do it, it breaks me—Jamesie went down with them in mid-Channel, with his mother waiting at the port beyond: with an hour or two's journey between him and safety, a long life-time of safety, surely promised him in her arms.

Wait! Why this outcry upon me? Jamesie was not singular. Hundreds, thousands of children, no less than he in life and promise, in worth and preciousness, have been so choked of late uncomplaining, uncomprehending the thing that grasped them, these unutterable years. Stand back from our tragedy then, and keep your breath for other oracles, who, if you implore them properly, may answer in time.

What had Jamesie to do with the fiend incarnate that killed him, the slashing, grasping, cowardly fiend that spreads nets and mines upon the Eternity's open seas? *I do not mean Germany*, Germany is not what we are making for. Or rather, and fearless of an ungenerous response, I put to our Enemy here and now this question. . . .]

APPENDIX



APPENDIX

HERBERT went forth to the slaughter himself, before he had time to collect the final letters, order the former ones, or to revise the fragment given above. He left me, du Fretay, on the French side (in both senses) to finish the recital, and offer to the world of Jamesie such letters as were not too sacred,—they are rather hard to find.

That I cannot speak of it at length will be excused, for I was through it, at my friends' side. I witnessed that long agony, a night and a day. Even as my own mother's had been, which once she consoled, that agony was uncertainty,—blank uncertainty as to their son's fate. For six-and-thirty hours, we three in concert, on either side the water, could not discover whether the lost child were Jamesie or no. They thought he might appear again to them, their angel, wet but radiant. . . .

The rescued passengers, rejoiced to be quit of the damaged boat, lied, inflated, dribbled invention, as always occurs; never does the fundamental silliness of humanity overpower one, as on these occasions. What could such ape-like existences import the world, in any case, prolonged or otherwise? Added to this, others of the lost returned, one witnessed meetings. Suir's name is easily misprinted, he told me, and easily misheard. Children, such as his was, do without their

second name. Walking the slopes of earth, the morning slopes, one is very sufficient. . . . Lastly we met the tired man who looked him in the eyes and told him, set him at rest. Rest! Oddly enough it is Wickford's face under the lamps that I remember. The blow glanced, as it were, betraying them. Wickford, the weaker-minded, had been able to deceive himself.

Miss Pennant, who was saved, completed it; she was too exhausted to recount at first. Her sister had gone down, as it seemed, nobly, holding up the boy. That was a 'belle mort,' I grant you, Herbert, you that scoffed at our knightly term. It seems these girls were 'record' swimmers: that Mrs. Monk, who was drowned, had taken many prizes in her maiden days. That is a most rightful talent in the English, sea-surrounded: and I like to record it of her, even while it served not to save Jamesie's life.

I sift these last letters idly, the fighters, the philosophers, men and women, weak and strong, the finished kind and the unfinished: and I ask myself, as Herbert did, amid so many tragedies, the cataract of a whole generation down the smooth chute to death,—is it worth it? Yet, through the few pages he left me, his meaning pierces dimly, for all are in agreement. People wide asunder in sex, in intellect, in sympathy, echo one another, even to absurdity. One speculates whether a whole world might not echo, in a not too-far period? Is it so unthinkable? Our children are not our own, in the sense of being slaves to our prejudices. Even now they are growing up, and, granted we refrain from touching, they will question in time. How far are we to risk their displeasure, their bewilderment, their wonder, worst of all? I can see him wonder-

ing, seeking a little already, in his first sunlight,—Jamesie.

Enough, it shatters me. I suppose I am out-wearied. It is frightful, the mere thought of such judges watching us,—outside,—God of Battles, any sort but that! It is not fair, this experience, to a mere man, a simple soldier, which, in my country's martyrdom, is all I ask to be. See only these young knights that follow, their palpable disarray! And if it undoes us, do you see?—what of the women?

* * * *

Cardew to Ronald Crawford.

Where are you? I'm nowhere. On my honour, Janet's telegram turned me quite green, the men noticed it. I managed to say a kid had gone, that settled them, though some looked pretty black.* They'll fight the better for it. I simply can't think about Suir, Wick is as bad in this instance, and as for her—it's foul, you know. Any other—because he was coming on so. He really was, it would surprise them, I dare say, if I could show him some things I recently had. I was looking over them to-night, kept all but all, which is more than I do yours, old goat, or Mother's either. But I can't do it, it knocks me. Look here, I want to hear facts, but not from females. Can't say how I see this a man's job; anyhow, men have to avenge him. After all, turning it over, one might sooner write to him direct,—he might allow for one, more than Janet's. He might follow—that's all I can think of, anyhow. Just let us know where you are.

* A Scotch regiment.

Ronald to Cardew.

I wrote to him, managed to get a line together. Perhaps I know him a trifle more than you. I said nothing but the common rot, no point. It's all such a [Ronald uses language] beastly bloody jam, Shere was right about it. Jam was his word. . . . He was smashed, you know. Suir said so to the old parson,—used the word. They have not told her, she keeps Joyce Pennant's version, which is a grain more bearable, that the kid was 'unconscious' in Linda's hands, and drowned so. But a fellow on deck saw it happen; some block or spar loosened in the first explosion swung free and fell on a boat-load, knocking him right out, and rocketing him with some others into the sea. You bet that man found out the facts,—I shouldn't like myself not to let him have the rights of things. Grim death, can't you see him at it? That girl Linda flung off her things, and streaked straight after,—threw her life away. A clean header, like I have seen her often at the baths. There's no end to the girls.* Several people saw her catch him, and that was all. They were never seen again, and the boy was dead anyway. Suir is sure of it,—Joyce could not tell him, or would not, sickened, poor lass, but he is sure by everything. The parson was splendid, went straight to them: Wickford's mother was utterly broken up. She had a notion she was responsible, somehow,—and that is why Iveagh went home. Janet said she was afraid of him,—his mother, I mean: which altogether, considering some of the scraps you and I have witnessed, seems a very queer

* Compliment.

thing. The fact is she is on her last legs probably, and he knows it,—Janet will tell us some time. J. was on the spot as usual, doing nothing, which was the only earthly thing for her to do. . . . No, I shan't write to women, I don't feel exactly like it. You'll never guess who I chose,—the Frenchman. Iveagh showed me him once, and he seemed all right, at first view anyhow; so I risked it. I send you what I got from him—English. Mine was French. It made me think of one of the Latin fellows, Virgil or somebody, that's his form. It's decent.

R.

[I forebear to give Lieutenant Crawford's French letter: which, however, was 'gentille,' like himself. I marked him, on the occasion he mentions, as a little enormous Scotch gentil-homme.]

DEAR MR. CRAWFORD,

I have received your note, whose request for news so far as I am able I comply with. She is wonderful, working as before: my mother was helpless to persuade her to cease, when she returned from —, the last hope gone. Suir had a temporary break, but he is better: he was already, as you know, far from well. Wickford is shielding him ably, as of old, in their schooldays; and I try not to quarrel with that family tradition, or trick of servitude, to which his talents seem destined, and which, at such a juncture, carries him from his wife's side, home. By the munificence of the general B——, to whom his 'groupe' was attached, he is permitted nine days of rest,—nine, with voyages. No doubt a funeral would have made it a fortnight. We may not mourn now, it seems, even for a star like that.

There is no speaking of what it means to him, truly, nor comparing. It seems ordinary to say that he would have offered his own life twenty times,—we all knew it, did we not? But the easiest, I have learnt, is never asked of that sort. It is always, while we fool or fritter the time, at grips with the eternals, out of sight. I thank you for your sympathy. I would that by any suffering of my own I could ease him, but it is useless to ask. You will excuse this awkward utterance.

Yours obliged,

G. DU FRETAY.

[Cardew returned it to his brother with the comment,—‘Star is good.’ Good? It was Milton. Yes, and the ‘forehead of the morning sky,’ just after. The forehead of the sky, that was Jamesie: his regard, fresh and mystic. . . . Yet I ask you, even in this distress I cannot avoid: is that country not evidently exceptional that can produce, at either extreme of its verbal expression, Milton,—and Cardew?

I subscribe to the following, and I thank the writer.]

YOUR GRACE,

Sophie and I do not venture to express our feelings, but our happiness is dashed goes without saying, and could you in any way convey to his lordship your brother our sympathy in his great affliction, it might seem to come as a relief. As it is we are weighed down by a Debt, I can call it no other, to Mr. James’ graciousness in minding about us, in caring about us so continual, and in blessing of us as he did to the last. It is not my own feeling only, for I compared with her, and it is hers as much. If anything, ever, we think, can make sweet

goodwill between the countries, all so different by nature and origin, it is spirits like that.

Your respectful servants,

F. AND S. BLAKIE, LONDON.

[He enclosed every atom he had ever received from the child, for the father's eye to see.]

Bess, O Bess, what shall I say? I dare not come near you, you would curse me, and rightly, for being alive. Linda is gone with him, that is all I can think of,—not that I cared for Linda. I saw where they were, had been,—I tried to go after, I had a belt. But the men would not let me. They would take care of me. They always do.

Oh God, I wish I had done what Linda did. Why couldn't I? I must be a coward really. You should hear them talk of her here, the Lieutenant too: and I always despised her. Maddie says she wouldn't have either, but that's bedside, of course she would. Though never that style. Linda was like a snake diving,—I suppose you never saw her,—Herbert has. I see them with my eyes shut going down—down—both of them. Beautiful, weren't they both? It was all orchestral. I say, Jack would have liked it. Do you think she dived to Jack?

Then there is yours,—immense: and I behaved like an ass to him to-day. I couldn't get a word out: but he frightened me, looking like that. How nice M. du Frettay is, watching him. I love them grave.* They were miles beyond me, miles. Just being decent like that to a fool. Only I felt all the time how he must be loathing me. You know, it does make it difficult.

One thing more, wasn't there ? I am afraid we teased him: teased him in the cabin, but he was sweet. Manners, Maddie is right. I think I was jealous of Mad, the way he spoke of her. He was fond of her, really,—Bess, will you tell her so ? I can't, though she is here. She is a good kid, she is better than I am, she has worked more: I have enjoyed it.* I tried to see it all as music, a new sort, ripping, showier than Strauss. But it isn't, it is not, it is rank. Reuss wrote so, they all knew it, the old ones. It is the wrong side of music, weakening, wallowing, that leads to Hell. It isn't even new, it's as old as the monkeys. But what is the use, talking to you ? Only say you are not angry,—*you* say it: though I shan't believe you. Either of you. I can't write any more.

[I refrain from comment—the girl's state of exhaustion is apparent. I am assured she is neither stupid nor heartless, for all she tormented my friend by her evasions, during the interview of which she speaks. Iveagh assured me of it, even if I had not made certain observations myself. One excused her, easily: I could even contemplate conversing with her, in a state of sanity: only it appears to me unlikely that 'the Lieutenant' (whom we both observed) will give me the opportunity.]

Sir James Byrne to Iveagh: fragment of an otherwise unquotable letter.

The method of life proves itself daily. It neither alters the good, nor glorifies the bad: and the best it wastes steadily.

* La guerre,—confessions et elle ose le dire !

Herbert to her—ditto.

You guarded him well through our tumult: now give him to us, we need him. He will better us as a witness, when the time comes. He is the first argument.

John Ingestre Esq., to him.

Remember? Freshness, fitness, temperateness, clarity,—what they call innocence, wasn't it? And that nice unconcern they have, not indifference exactly, but using us for their ends. So real and rational, good Lord, compared with our present practices. . . . Look here, you bear with romancing. We had lately, after nine hours' unremitting cannonade, a thunderstorm. A great washing glory it was, ordinary sort, loud perhaps by the Lord's standard,—nothing by ours. By contrast with our viciousness and vulgarity, what you would expect. Anyhow I loved it so, that it woke me, hastily. I saw our entertainment as it is, and I said so, not quite out of the Scriptures. This here is a superb convention, superbly played, but it isn't anything really. It stands for nothing. Respectable people can't even look at it, except to look beyond. I saw straight, that once, and I classed it. *You are nothing but a pack of cards.**

Iveagh's doctor in the East—weeks late, naturally.

Remember him? One stores such memories. I still can feel his little gripe on me, lively and compelling, and his laughter and shyness, that sunny morning, when

* Quotation.

I let him come to you in Ireland, after his great emprise. And then he would tell us nothing of it, for all our prompting, would he? Only choked you carelessly, and smote you with his clenched fist for your improbable surmises. Rather hard,—I was a little nervous at his forcefulness: though I noticed you were not. You would have let him finish you, that day,—you told me as much afterwards. Have you forgotten that? . . . Only—do not now. Be careful, my dear boy, for your wife's sake. I am a little fearful you should follow him, out of simple curiosity. . . . The dreams in your last interested me. I was hardly surprised by my daughter's cable, closely following, carrying this news.

The Duke to the Duchess.

[In answer to some challenge,—Public, hein?—that I fain would see. It inconveniences me extraordinarily to be unacquainted with this lady: and I trust, when the war-map is rolled up and put away, and Wickford has a little time to spare from his meals, he will recollect his duty to the Alliance, and introduce me.]

I do not think, during the present ghastly state of things, which holds the promise of ghastlier daily, and not much else, we men in respectable thinking countries have ever tried to hold the women in. Why?—because we are afraid of you. Do what we will, you are still doing in schools, and nurseries, and at prayer-time (I do not say church) the bigger half of the business. More power to you, my dear: often, I think, without the thought of you to bridge the gulf we are digging, we should break. Because we are not as bad as you think, you mistake us: or rather you did of late years

in the excitement of the moment. We do not necessarily think ourselves inspired because we can, by the infernal efforts of millions, organise ruin to this extent. It is grinding, black necessity that drives us: common duty, common humility, may I say, lit up by a little light of family pride. But if you and the women we are guarding see a bigger light ahead, a better pride,—as Bess does,—make for it: never say we selfishly held you in critical times: particularly when it is you have a little time to think. I have my religion, enough for this one life, I own it; but if you get Kells a better one—or Aileen—I may be talking rot, but I own this thing has shaken me badly: and Bess's face, when he brought the worst to her, and she said, though she held for her life to him, thoughtfully as a worker does—'I think he was all right.' I give it her,—I give it both of them. Surely, darling, we who argue gloriously that none of our heroes who fall powder-black and bloody to the elbows are 'wasted,' may let them argue as much of little Jim. . . .

[The Duchess pondered, wept, and worked him into her plans. Of this I am positive, although her 'public' letter, owing to Wickford's stilted correctitude, has eluded my grasp.]

Miss Madeleine's schoolmistress to her.

The answer is simple, my dear,—do *not* resign yourself. Resignation is the last thing they can ask of us, though our service and our silence they may claim.

Miss (?) Rochester, Ireland, to Iveagh.

It is not the sea can keep him, darling, with the bursting ugliness that is shaming it; and it is not God's Heaven would interest him nowadays with shadows shooting at you, and the nightbirds flitchering about. There is nowhere safe for a child the like he was but our hearts that are hot to withhold him: and this one, of a mother's that is, though sinful, will share him with you best.

[Suir corrected the above, which I had nearly refused, in my ignorance. I now find that no other will stand after it,—unless perhaps one.]

LADY IVEAGH,

I cannot speak to you, my lady, in your sorrow as people like the Duchess can, who with children of their own know the pain of bearing them, and keep that pain in their hearts concerning them until the end of life. But I do know, with your leave, a little of the other trouble of training them, and all children I have had near me I watch develop with a little of the mother's eye. It is a joy when they succeed, a grief when they fail, as it might be that of their first teacher in some sensible school. But yours, my lady, was more than that to me. Partly because of his kind heart and amusing ways, but more because when I had him, it was largely in his mother's absence, which you will understand. I might play your ladyship's part to him a little without self-blame or fear of unfairness; and in those times, no doubt, he managed to catch and hold me such that hearing what the Duke said that dreadful morning

broke me down. Fortunately as his kindness would have it we were alone, for I could not have kept up before the servants. I loved the child, I will not say better than Kells, who has taken more of my effort, but equally. I feel for you and his lordship in your sorrow more than these poor lines can say. May God help you and grant you consolation in your work for others, as He will surely.

Yours faithfully,

CHRISTINA T. JOHNSTONE.

(Nurse.)



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